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ABSTRACT

The text explores Mexico's history, geography, art, religion, and lifestyles in the context of its complex economy. The text focuses on Mexico's economy and reasons for its current situation. Part I of this teaching unit includes: Teacher Overview, Why Study Mexico, Mexico Fact Sheet, Map of Mexico, the Land and Climate, History, Government, Religion, People, Agriculture, Industry, Cities, Housing, Family Life, Food, Dress, Health, Education, the Arts, Leisure, and Glossary. Part II contains activities. (BZ)

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MEXICO

By LESLIE SEMAAN and ILLUSTRATED BY ROSS POMEROY

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MEXICO

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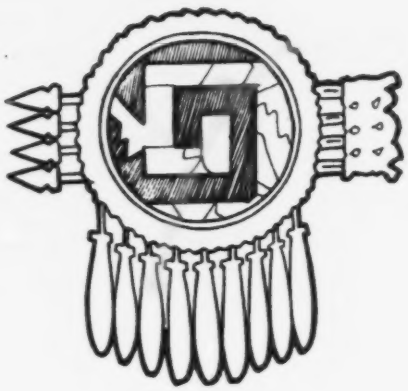
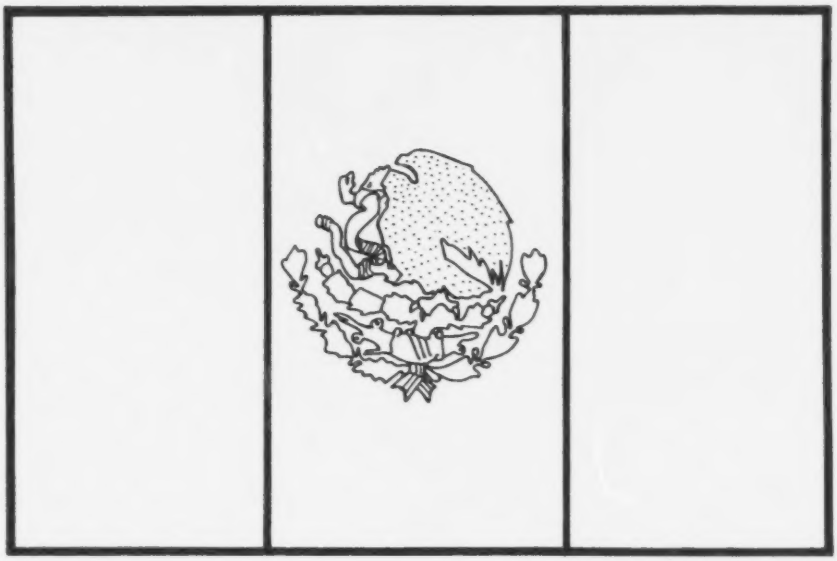


TEACHER OVERVIEW



The Mexico text gives students the opportunity to explore a neighbouring country - its land and its people, their history, religion, art and lifestyles. The text also focuses on Mexico's economy and the reasons for its current situation. Sections featuring the economy include Agriculture and Industry, which is examined under the headings: Petroleum Industry, Tourism, Maquiladoras, Manufacturing and Cottage Industries.

The Text is divided into units according to subject areas such as The Land, Cities, History, etc. These units can be duplicated and handed out to the class, used for teacher reference, or made into transparencies and shown on an overhead projector. The text covers a wide variety of topics. This gives teachers an opportunity to choose the areas on which they would like to concentrate.

Suggested Activities consists of a series of questions, discussion topics, activities, quizzes and research projects. These correspond directly to the textual material. Teachers can choose from the variety of suggestions or adapt the ideas to their own methods.

WHY STUDY MEXICO?

Few Canadians realize what an interesting neighbour we have - one with whom we share the North American continent. No, not the U.S., but Mexico.

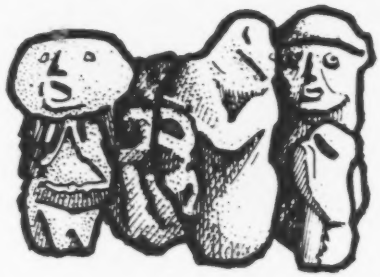
Even though we inhabit the same continent, we are very different. It is not just that we consider ourselves to be a developed nation while Mexico is still considered to be developing; even if Mexico were just as developed as we are, our countries would still be very different. We have different origins.

In Canada, the British and French came to a land that was sparsely inhabited with nomadic Indian tribes, whom they restrained in order to open up the land for settlement. There was little intermarriage, especially with the British, and the Indians were left to develop their culture separately on reservations. Compared to Mexico, there were few missionaries sent to convert the Indians to their religion or to teach them their languages. The culture here has tended, historically, to be predominantly either British or French with other nationalities making their contributions. Today Canada is a multicultural country, with a mosaic of cultures rather than a single cultural identity.

By contrast, in Mexico, the Spanish arrived in a land inhabited by huge Indian civilizations with permanent agricultural settlements and cities. The Spanish conquered the Mesoamericans, intermarried with them, converted them to Catholicism and taught them their language. The Mexico of today is not only a racial but a religious and cultural crossbreeding, bringing about a unique society. "Mexico is the most Spanish country in Latin America; at the same time, it is the most Indian," says Octavio Paz, one of Mexico's most noted writers. Mexicans have a very positive feeling of what it means to be Mexican.

The intent of the text **Mexico** is to provide a learning experience - a means of increasing understanding and dispelling myths and stereotypes that exist about our neighbouring country. Mexico is a nation which has been important to Canada and the U.S. for a long time, not only as a trading partner but as a powerful force in the hemisphere and a country which is likely to play a crucial role on the world scene. The text should help to promote appreciation and understanding of the factors that underlie Mexico's complex culture.

MEXICO FACT SHEET



EARLY STONE FIGURES

SIZE: Mexico's area is 1,972,363 sq. km (761,530 sq. mi.).

LOCATION: Mexico is part of the North American continent, bordered by the United States of America to the north and by Belize and Guatemala to the south.

POPULATION: 77.7 million (1986) One half the population is 18 or under.

CAPITAL CITY: México D.F. (District Federale), also known as Mexico City. Population is 18.1 million.

DIVISIONS OF GOVERNMENT: 1 Federal District, 31 Provinces.

LEADER: President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado (1982-1988).

NATIONAL FLAG: Green, white and red vertical bands with an eagle on a cactus holding a snake in its mouth on the white band.

NATIONAL ANTHEM: "Mexicanos, al grito de guerra" "Mexicans, to the Cry of War"

CURRENCY: Peso = 100 centavos
$1 Can. = 417 pesos (Oct. 1986).

GNP PER CAPITA: (in US$)	1982	1983	1984
Mexico	2,270	2,240	2,040
Canada	11,320	12,310	13,280
U.S.	13,160	14,110	15,390

LANGUAGES: The official language is Spanish. Many Amerindian languages are also spoken. These include Nahuatl, Maya, Mixtec and Zapotec.

RELIGION: 96% of the population is Roman Catholic. 3.6% is Protestant.

HEALTH: 1 physician for every 1260 people.

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 64 years for men, and 66 years for women.

EDUCATION: Primary school is free and compulsory. Secondary school is attended by 37% of the population. Post-secondary school is attended by 15%. Teacher-student ratio is 1 teacher per 58 students.

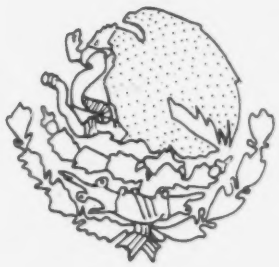
LITERACY: 83% of the adult population is literate.

MAIN CROPS: Maize (corn), cotton, wheat, sugar cane, coffee, sorghum and oilseeds.

MAIN MINERALS: oil, gas, coal, iron, phosphates, copper, lead.

RESOURCES: zinc, manganese, silver, gold.

MAP OF MEXICO



THE LAND AND CLIMATE

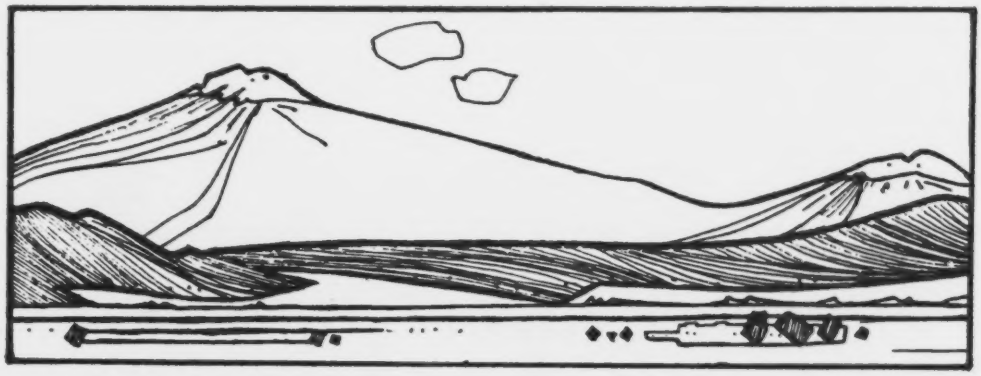
Mexico is shaped like a horn of plenty. It is filled with palm-fringed beaches, arid deserts where cacti flourish and flower, snow-capped mountains and volcanoes, and tropical rain forests (jungles).

With an area of 1,972,363 sq. km (761,530 sq. mi.), Mexico is about the same size as the prairie provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba combined.

The widest part of the country is the northern frontier which borders the U.S.. Part of this border is marked by the river known to the Mexicans as the Rio Bravo del Norte and to the Americans as the Rio Grande.

As you move south from the border, the country is made up of enormous stretches of desert broken by hills and mountains. Strange cacti of all shapes and sizes dot the landscape, as do occasional villages or small groups of houses clustered around a railway stop.

The farther you travel south the more the mountains widen and reach higher. The mountain chains of Mexico run from north to south through the country. The mountains to the east are called the Sierra Madre Oriental (Mother Range of the East) while those in the west are called the Sierra Madre Occidental (Mother Range of the West), and are the higher of the two ranges. At Mexico's centre, a few miles south of Mexico City where the two ranges join, is the Anáhuac with its two famous volcanic peaks, Popocatepetl "The Smoking Mountain" and Ixtaccíhuatl "The Sleeping Woman". An Indian legend tells the story that these two volcanoes were once a prince and princess. Although they were in love they were forbidden to marry because their people were at war with one another. It is said the princess died of a broken heart. When the volcano Popocatepetl smokes and rumbles, Indian folklore says the prince is mourning his lost love, Ixtaccíhuatl.



VOLCANOS, POPOCATEPETL (SMOKING MOUNTAIN) AND IZTACCIHUATL (SLEEPING WOMAN)

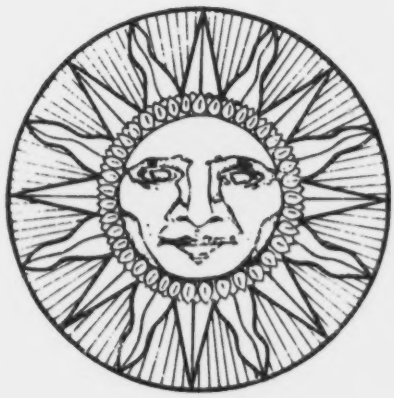
Lying between the two mountain ranges is a vast table-land, the altiplano, wide in the north and narrow in the south. This is where most of the Mexican people live. It is not a single valley, but a series of valleys and basins. The capital, Mexico City, occupies one valley while Puebla and Guadalajara, Mexico's other most populous cities, are located in other valleys.

The narrowest part of Mexico is towards the south where the land forms a narrow bridge called the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. It is about 200 km (125 mi.) wide.

The peninsula of the Yucatan sticks out from the isthmus like a large thumb. It is a flat limestone plain, very different from the rest of Mexico. Other low areas are the coastal strips of Mexico which are washed by the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean.

Lush tropical forests grow mainly in the south in areas with abundant rainfall. Some areas have such a dense tangle of trees, vines and roots, that it is difficult to pass through and easy to get lost. Despite the very different forms the geography of Mexico takes, the people have always shown a very deep respect and love for their land.

CLIMATE



Although the sun shines brightly all over Mexico, local temperatures depend mainly on the altitude.

Mexicans divide their country into different climatic zones. The *tierra caliente* is hot all the year round. This area, which is along the coastal plains and in the Yucatan, gets a breeze because of its location near the sea. Instead of our four seasons, this region has only two. One is hot and dry and the other is the rainy season. During the wet season it rains very heavily though usually only in the afternoons and evenings. In some places on the Gulf of Mexico, however, the rainfall is measured in metres instead of centimetres (feet instead of inches). The dry season lasts from October until May. Whatever the season though, in this zone, temperatures remain about the same all year long.

The next temperature zone, the *tierra templada* or temperate (middle) zone is in the altiplano, which is higher in altitude. Here the temperatures are generally cooler, between 24°C (70°F) and 18°C (64°F), although in the deserts it is burning hot during the day and cold at night.

Thirdly, above 1800 m (6,000 ft.) in elevation lies the *tierra fria* or cold country, with warm or hot summers and cool winters. The annual average temperature lies below 18°C (64°F). This is where Mexico City is located. At these altitudes the sunshine is felt to be quite warm even when the air temperature is no more than 15°C (60°F). This is because of solar radiation. At night it cools off enough to make it necessary to wear sweaters, and in December and January it may even snow.

HISTORY

PREHISTORIC TIMES

The first people to live in Mexico probably arrived in North America between 30,000 and 40,000 years ago. They were nomadic hunters who had crossed what is now the Bering Strait from Asia when the continents were connected. Gradually, they spread down the west coast and along the eastern slope of the Rockies into Mexico.

These early people hunted, fished and collected roots, berries and fruits. Then over a period of 5,000 to 3,000 years ago something happened to change the course of history. It was the domestication of corn. The growing of corn was a more efficient way to provide food than hunting and gathering. The people built better houses and started to settle down in villages. Eventually, they developed pottery and basketry.

THE MAYA

One of the earliest of the new civilizations to emerge was the Maya. The farmers began to notice that at certain times of the year the corn grew better. This led to a study of the weather and eventually to their learning more about the planets and the stars. How many moons passed before the corn was ripe? Where was the sun during the different seasons? To answer these questions the Maya took up astronomy. To be able to observe the heavenly bodies more clearly and to honour their gods, they built huge pyramids. It was their concern with the connection between the heavens and the seasons that led to one of the Maya's finest accomplishments - a calendar even more accurate than the one we use today. This invention could only be kept by a special class of people - an order of priests who calculated the time of planting by the stars. Above all, they intervened between the gods, who ruled the heavens and earth, and people.

MAYAN FIGURINE

These priests were the first class of people not to work in the fields and feed themselves by their own labour, but who were instead supported by others. This was another step in civilization. The priests ordered sacred cities to be built. These included temples, palaces, schools, plazas, courtyards, and the towering stone pyramids. A further step was to decorate these structures to make them more beautiful to the gods. Thus, architecture and painting were born.

Although a surplus of food was being produced to support these new classes, life in Mayan times was very precarious. This made the Maya see their gods as monsters, who needed human blood to satisfy them. The killing of people on stone altars or the hurling of young girls into deep wells, they felt, was necessary to make the sun rise and the plants produce. Human sacrifices were very common. The people to be sacrificed were not bound as it was considered an honour to be chosen for the ceremony.

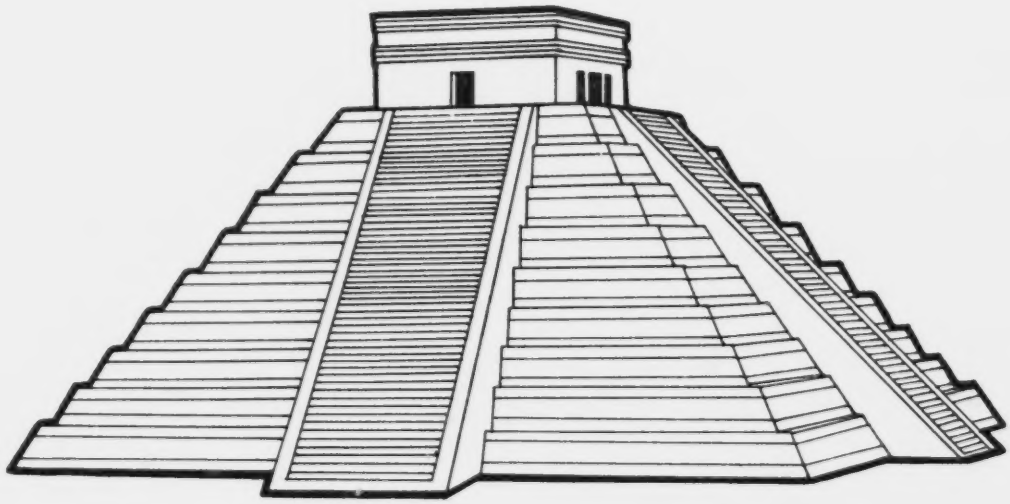
THE MAYAN EMPIRE

At the height of the Mayan period, there may have been as many as 300 cities. These were not inhabited by the ordinary (farming) people but were religious centres built to please the gods. The farmers usually lived within one day's journey of a city (about 24 km or 15 mi.), as that is where they would go to trade any surplus of crops. They also had to help build pyramids and to worship the gods. Since the Maya did not develop the wheel and they did not have horses or other pack animals, everything that went overland was transported on the backs of the people. In order to make travel easier, raised, wide stone roads were built between important cities.

DECLINE OF THE CITIES

For many centuries, the Mayan culture flourished. Then in the ninth century all came to an end. The cities were abandoned to the sun, the wind and the jungle. Why did the people leave? There are many theories. Perhaps a drought caused the corn crop to fail. Without a surplus of food the people in the great centres could not be fed. And because the priests were unable to end the drought by pacifying the anger of the gods, the people lost respect for them and rebelled. Whatever the reason, the Mayan cities were abandoned. The common people survived, however. Some stayed in the southern jungles and some wandered up the Yucatan and along the Gulf Coast.

About the year AD 900 the Maya civilization was partially conquered by a people known as the Toltec. They came from north of where Mexico City is today. Before long the two cultures were blended. The new culture lasted until 1400 when the cities were abandoned to the forest. Although the Maya people with their distinct physical features, language and culture still live in southern Mexico today, the only evidence of their great civilization can be found in ruins at Palenque, Chichén Itzá, Uxmal or Tulum and other places.



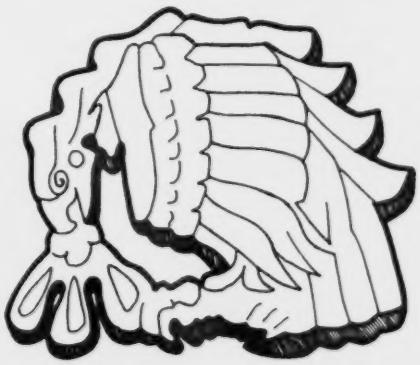
EL CASTILLO, CHICHÉN ITZÁ

THE AZTECS (Aztecas or Mexicas)

The Aztecs, (also known as the Mexicas, who gave Mexico its name), were considered barbarians when they first roamed into the Valley of Mexico in the 12th century AD. Coming from the northern deserts, they were looking for a better place to live. One Mexica custom was the worship of Huitzilopochtli (Hummingbird to the Left (south)), who was their tribal god. His symbol was the eagle and he spoke to the people through the mouths of the priests. Mexican history states that their god continually ordered them to move on. For many years the tribe did not stay long in one place. Their god told them to look for an eagle perched on a cactus growing out of a stone. This they discovered - with a snake in the eagle's beak - at Tenochtitlán. The emblem on today's Mexican flag comes from this legend.

Huitzilopochtli, known as the Sun God, was also the God of War and the Mexicas believed he had chosen them to conquer the world. They felt they must offer their god the continual blood that he needed so that he could continue to rise in the east and triumph over the night. With their well-disciplined armies the Mexica fought and gained a large empire that eventually consisted of about half of Middle America - an area that held between 11 and 20 million people.

After each victory long lines of bound prisoners were taken back for the altars of Huitzilopochtli. The conquered towns were then made to pay taxes in the form of gold, corn, jade, textiles or other products of the land. Because they were victorious everywhere, each year the Mexica increased their power and wealth.



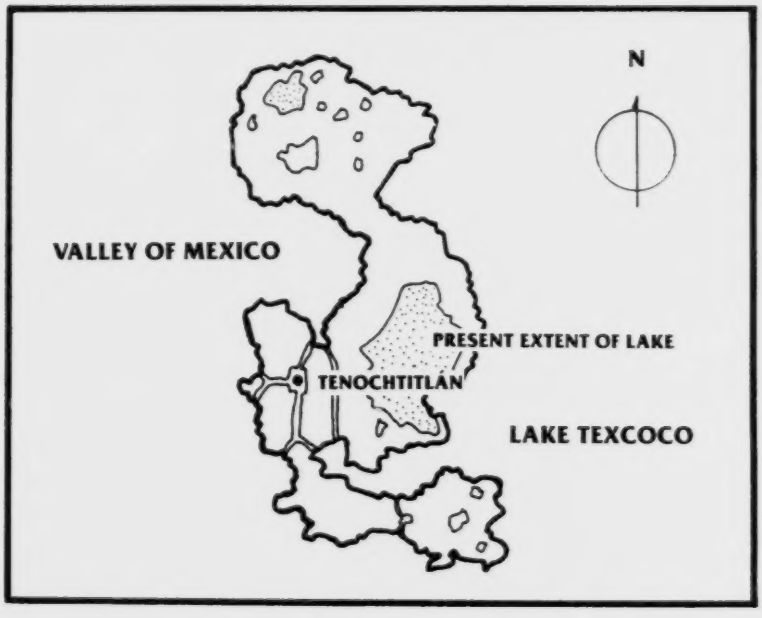
EAGLE BAS-RELIEF

TENOCHTITLÁN

Tenochtitlán, the Mexica capital, was built on raised mud islands in the middle of Lake Texcoco. The city was honey-combed by canals and surrounded by open water. Three long causeways linked it with the mainland on each side.

By the 16th century, Tenochtitlán had become a magnificent city surpassing even European capitals of the time. The rulers were constantly building new temples, palaces, plazas and monuments. The huge market-place sold products from all over Mexico. White-wash coated the outside of the buildings and gave the city a bright silvery appearance in the high clear air. Adding dazzling colour here and there were aviaries of tropical birds, zoos, beautiful botanical gardens and flower-filled parks.

Some 60,000 buildings rose in this city where more than 250,000 people lived. The houses of the ordinary people were similar to those in which many Mexicans live today, built from wattle with thatched roofs.



THE LEGEND - DOWNFALL OF THE MEXICA

Moctezuma II, who ruled Tenochtitlán and the Mexica's vast empire in the sixteenth century, had been raised as a priest instead of, as most rulers had been, as a warrior. He was constantly looking for omens in order to rule his kingdom well.

About 1509 a series of strange events began to take place. When these were interpreted they all pointed to the destruction of the Mexica people. Moctezuma increased his efforts to please the gods by demanding from conquered tribes more and more warriors to be sacrificed.

Then a peasant came to tell Moctezuma that he had seen a small mountain floating on the Great Sea. Moctezuma sent envoys to the coast to find out the truth. Runners came back with stories about the Spanish galleons. The Spaniards were described as having beards, long hair and light skin.

Moctezuma was reminded of the ancient legend of Quetzalcoatl, the "light god", the "plumed serpent" who had disappeared centuries earlier. Sailing away on a raft made of snakes, the god had promised to return from the east in the year known as "1 - Reed" to reclaim his rightful throne. As the date was not far off, Moctezuma ordered the best goldsmiths and gem and feather artisans to make beautiful gifts for these strangers, whom he thought might be gods.

QUETZALCOATL

Far from being gods, the men under the leadership of Hernán Cortés were prepared to conquer any kingdom they might find, for glory, god and gold.

Cortés, hearing tales of a magnificent kingdom, decided to march to Tenochtitlán. The news of his coming was brought to Moctezuma and he sent messengers to Cortés. They dressed Cortés in the ornaments they had made for the returned gods - a gold serpent mask inlaid with turquoise, a decorated vest, a gold shield with mother of pearl and sandals for his feet.

This convinced Cortés that there truly was a civilization worth conquering.

THE CONQUEST

HERNÁN CORTÉS

Without delay he began his war of conquest with the Mexicas' empire. Many tribes formerly conquered by the Mexicas were hostile to them and so joined Cortés' forces; it is estimated that 150,000 Indians aided Cortés in his two-year campaign.

His army sweated through the mosquito-infested lowlands, up into the eastern mountains. They passed by Orizaba, the highest snow-capped peak in the country and climbed a mountain pass 3000 m (10,000 ft.) above sea level - into endless mountain valleys green with corn crops.

Almost four months after they left the coast, Cortés led 400 armed Spaniards into Tenochtitlan. They were greeted by Moctezuma, whom they soon took hostage. For six months Cortés ruled the empire. During this time the Spaniards collected all the gold they could find.

Cortés hated the human sacrifices held on the pyramid for Huitzilopochtli. He held Catholic services on the pyramid, which drove the Mexica priests almost to rebellion.

RETREAT AND FINAL ASSAULT

While Cortés was away from the capital, one of his lieutenants led an attack on the Mexica during a religious festival and massacred thousands of young warriors. When Cortés returned, he found Moctezuma in chains and the citizens ready to rebel. Moctezuma tried to calm them, but was injured in the process. His death followed shortly after, though it is unknown whether his own people or the Spaniards killed him.

After many battles, the Spanish *conquistadores* retreated from the Mexica capital - but plotted their return.

One of Cortés' men had apparently brought smallpox into the capital. Because the native people lacked immunity to this European disease, an epidemic swept over the area with thousands of people dying. Others were weakened and left pockmarked or blinded before the plague ended. Cuitlahuac, who assumed the throne after Moctezuma's death, died during the smallpox outbreak and the throne was passed to his nephew, Cuauhtémoc (Falling Eagle).

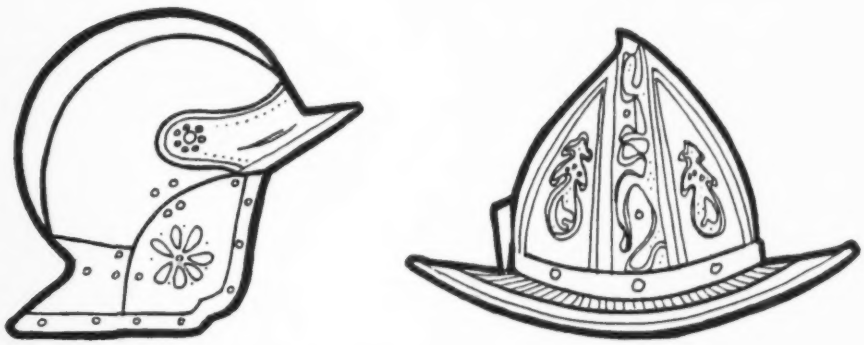
Cortés returned and, unable to take the city by fighting, he began to starve the inhabitants and cut off their supply of drinking water. The starving people ate lizards and birds. The polluted water gave people dysentery. Many began to die or to flee from the city. Now the Spaniards and their allies - warriors from other tribes - began to attack. After eight months, the city, a bloody, smoldering ruin, surrendered to the Spanish. When the Spanish were not able to find the large amounts of gold they expected, they tortured Cuauhtémoc to make him confess where the gold was stored. Cuauhtémoc's feet were thrust over a brazier of red-hot coals. He did not confess, however, and Cortes halted the torture before he died. Today Cuauhtémoc is considered a national hero.

Tenochtitlán was set on fire - its walls levelled to the ground. It was on this day - 1-Snake of the year 3-House - that the Mexica calendar ended and the Mexica civilization died.

THE COLONIAL PERIOD (1521 - 1810)

The Spaniards took over what had been the Mexica empire. They built their capital where Tenochtitlán had been.

In 1535 the Spanish sent their first viceroy to "New Spain", which made it an official Spanish colony. Preceding their viceroy, came the missionaries who had come not to destroy, as had the *conquistadores*, but to build. Hospitals, schools and model farms as well as churches were constructed. The land and mineral wealth of the colony could not be fully developed by the small number of Spanish. Because the Spanish did not believe in doing manual labour, different laws were introduced over the years, which forced the Indians - called *indios* by the Spanish - to do most of the physical work.



During the colonial period, which lasted almost 300 years, laws denied the Indians entry into the holy orders as well as into the professions and skilled trades. Also laws required that they live separately from the Spanish, and denied them European dress and firearms. These laws were made supposedly to protect the Indians and make them good Christians, uncorrupted by Europeans. However, they kept the Indians in slavery.

Gradually the Indians began to disappear. Epidemics worsened by crowded conditions took millions of lives. Also, as disease often brought on famine, whole communities died of starvation after an epidemic. About eleven million Indians lived in the conquered regions in 1520. By 1650 only about one million remained. Fertile land was abandoned. Wealthy landowners took over the land which led to a few people owning huge estates called *haciendas*. Many of the surviving Indians worked on these estates.

The Church also acquired large tracts of land. By 1810, one-third of all Mexico was owned by the Church. Most of this land was not worked, but lay fallow. With the Indians, by contrast, having no land to work, this apparent waste led to much discontent.

Spain's main interest in New Spain was in mining - mainly silver. Mexico became the richest country on earth. Most of the silver was sent to Spain. Work in the mines was also done by the Indians. Here they hacked out ore, working sometimes 460 m (1500 ft.) underground in tunnels for 12 hours a day. Many died. The clergy protested, but because of the huge sums the Spanish government was making from the silver, nothing was done.

SOCIETY IN COLONIAL TIMES

Most of the power in New Spain was held by those known as the *gachupines* or *peninsulares*, who had been born in Spain and had immigrated to New Spain. They were usually the government officials and the high clergy.

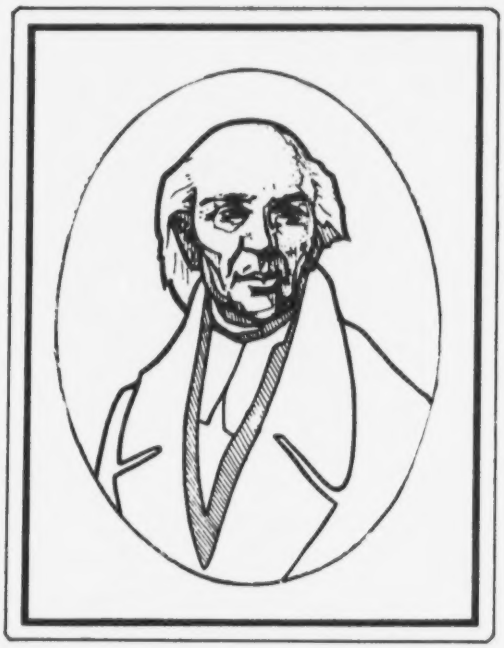
The *criollos* or creoles, the children of Spaniards born in New Spain, were usually the wealthy owners of estates and mines. As these people were considered inferior by the *peninsulares*, and did not have the same rights, many of the women were sent to Spain to have their children so that the infants might avoid the disgrace of being born in the New World.

The *mestizos*, of Spanish and Indian ancestry, worked as farmers, craftspeople and labourers. Today, they make up most of Mexico's population.

The *indios*, the pure-blooded Indians, were considered by the other citizens of New Spain to be at the bottom of the social ladder.

INDEPENDENCE

On September 16, 1810, Miguel Hidalgo, a priest in the small town of Dolores, ordered the Church bells to be rung and then called upon the Indians and *mestizos* to fight for their freedom. The hatred and humiliation of 300 years brought out crowds of people. The backbone of the mob that gathered was the *mestizo*, the people who held onto their small plots of land. These people for generations had been 'lorded over' by the *criollo* land owners and had been squeezed of all their money by the *peninsulare* tax collectors. A liberation army was hastily formed and set out, led by Hidalgo. Soon the army got out of hand. They overran *haciendas*, smashed property and looted cattle and corn. By the following year the Spanish soldiers had violently put down the rebellion. Hidalgo was captured and executed.



FATHER MIGUEL HIDALGO

Another uprising a few years later was led by another priest, Jose Maria Morelos. His revolutionaries were demanding the break-up of large estates, most of which were owned by the Church or by Spaniards. This rebellion was also unsuccessful and Morelos was put to death.

A NEW EMPEROR

The *criollo* aristocracy also wanted independence from Spain but they feared they would lose their positions if the *mestizo* or Indians got too much power.

The *criollos* supported a *criollo* officer named Iturbide, who had a reputation for being blood-thirsty. Iturbide called for the independence of Mexico and at the same time guaranteed the interests of the landowners, including Spaniards. The wealthy *criollos* flocked to his side. Iturbide was victorious and the last viceroy sent from Spain signed a treaty recognizing Mexican independence in October 1821.

The struggle for independence left 400-600 thousand dead and reduced agricultural and mining production by half.

Iturbide was proclaimed Emperor. On that day he issued a proclamation which read, "Mexicans, you now have liberty and independence. It is for you to find happiness." He resigned a year later and in 1824 he was shot. In the same year Mexico became a federal presidential democracy. There followed a period of continual revolutionary movements.

SANTA ANNA

During this time Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna became president six times in almost thirty years. He was responsible for Mexico's loss of territories to the U.S.. Texas declared independence from Mexico and nine years later became part of the United States. This led to war between the two countries. Mexico was defeated and U.S. troops entered Mexico City. In a treaty, Mexico was forced to give one-third of its national territory to the U.S.. This affected relations between the countries for a long time. When Santa Anna sold even more territory to the U.S., he was overthrown.

For years much of Mexico was over-run by bandits. The *criollos* and the clergy began to hope that the Europeans would return to power. However something quite the opposite happened. Benito Juárez, who had been born a Zapotec Indian, became president in 1858.

JUÁREZ

An orphan, Juárez was brought to the city of Oaxaca as a servant. At the age of twelve, his intelligence and moral character were recognized and he was sent to a local school. He later entered a seminary, but, on deciding he did not want to be a priest, he studied law.

BENITO JUÁREZ

As president, his laws brought about a separation between Church and state. Everything that belonged to the Church was taken over by the government. This included land, money and buildings. In place of parish offices, local governments started to keep records of births, marriages and deaths. Cemeteries became public and only civil marriages were recognized. Colonial art treasures with religious themes were burned, melted down, scattered or otherwise destroyed. These included all monastic books and manuscripts.

The new laws and their results angered wealthy Mexicans who led a revolt. This led to a three year civil war between the liberals - mostly poor *mestizos* and Indians and those who wanted to help them - and the conservatives, who were generally wealthy *criollos*. Following the war, the country had no money to pay its foreign debt.

In an attempt to force Mexico to pay its debts, the French army invaded Mexico in 1863. Napoleon III, the French ruler invited Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, of the Austrian royal family to be the emperor. Maximilian and his wife, Carlotta, ruled Mexico for three years. In 1867, the United States persuaded the French to leave Mexico. When they did, Maximilian,left unprotected, was taken prisoner and executed.

Juárez again became president. He started schools for the Indians and worked towards the break-up of the huge *haciendas*. In 1872, four years after his return he died at his desk from a heart attack. Juárez was affectionately called "El Indio" by his people. He is thought of as the Abraham Lincoln of Mexico.

DÍAZ

A few years later a former general in Juárez's army marched on the capital and defeated the government forces. His name was Porfirio Díaz and for the next thirty-six years he dominated Mexican politics either as president or the power behind the office.

Díaz was a *mestizo* from Oaxaca. He saw industrial progress as the key to solving Mexico's problems. Factories, railroads and public buildings sprang up everywhere. Foreign investment was encouraged. Foreign oil companies came in and developed the oil industry. This, however, was mainly to their own benefit as they neither paid any taxes nor shared any profits. Other foreign companies invested; they provided Mexico with new mining and farming techniques, electric power and water. Huge *haciendas* once again took over rural areas, ruling whole regions and sometimes whole states. Large amounts of beef, coffee, sisal, tobacco, fruit and other produce were sent abroad.

PORFIRIO DÍAZ

It was the best of times for some and the worst of times for others. Díaz passed a law that everybody had to prove ownership of their land or it would be taken away and sold. The wealthy land owners all had deeds. But with the small farmers, the land was usually passed on from one generation to the next according to Indian traditions. Under the new law their lands were seized.

Millions of hectares of fields that could have grown corn or wheat lay vacant. At the same time, millions of the poor struggled against starvation. The average working man was always in debt either to the *patrón* (*hacienda* owner) or the *hacienda* store. Under the law, the debts were passed from father to son. If a man in debt ran away the police would hunt him down. In this way families became tied to *haciendas* for generations, usually working for nothing. By 1910 the rural standard of living was lower than it had been when Hidalgo had raised his cry one hundred years earlier.

THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

PANCHO VILLA

Then, from 1910 to 1920 the countryside was torn apart by one of the bloodiest conflicts in the western hemisphere. The revolution, at first led by a politician, Francisco Madero, soon swept away Díaz's hated regime.

Two famous guerilla armies were organized. In the northern mountains and desert, miners, ranch workers and Indians - people who hated the corrupt government - started a campaign against the *federales*. Led by a revolutionary known as Francisco "Pancho" Villa, the raiders, mounted on horses, swept down from the mountains. They looted ranches, mining camps and towns and either occupied them or vanished into the rugged countryside.

In the south a liberating army had been organized by a *mestizo* farmer, Emiliano Zapata. Zapata's aims were land for the poor and their right to be left alone. Zapata was one of the few leaders who was not corrupt. He wanted nothing for himself - not even power. His followers came out of the forests and mountains, with knives and icons of the Virgin of Guadalupe (see Religion) pinned to their large straw sombreros. They took over *haciendas*, seizing and dividing the great estates, driving off the landlords and killing overseers.

EMILIANO ZAPATA

In 1917 revolutionary groups adopted a new constitution. It gave the government control over farmlands, oil wells, education and the Church. Gradually the big *haciendas* were broken up. The land was divided among the *campesinos* (farmers). Several families or a community would be given a large plot of land called an *ejido*. On some *ejidos*, all members shared the work of the farm and divided the profits. On others the land was divided into small plots for each family. The community actually owned the land, but each family worked and managed its plot individually. This system of farming was similar to traditional Indian ways.

By the end of the Mexican Revolution as many as one and a half million people had died and eight thousand villages had disappeared.

GOVERNMENT

With the end of the fighting people began to work toward the goals of the revolution as they were stated in the Constitution of 1917. (see History). The Mexican people believe their revolution is a continuing one whereby the people strive each year to more fully achieve their goals. The political party which is dedicated to carrying out the revolutionary programs is called the PRI, now known as the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party). It has won every presidential election since the 1920's.

The Mexican president is limited to one six-year term. Along with other high members of the PRI, he is responsible for choosing the next president, who is usually a faithful party member named late in the President's term.

The President of Mexico is a powerful symbol. His face and the red and green party letters appear everywhere - on posters in city streets, on borders by the highway and on walls and lamp posts.

In 1982, a well-known cabinet minister, Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, became a household word overnight when he was chosen to follow President Jose Lopez Portillo. The initials M.M. appeared everywhere.

Despite the Institutional Revolutionary Party's dedication to revolutionary programs, looking at Mexico today it is easy to forget that a revolution ever happened. Sixty percent of Mexicans are undernourished and even more lack adequate housing. Four million *campesinos* are without land - more than before the revolution that took place 76 years ago. Although over the last few years Mexico has been spoken of as an economic miracle, the majority of people still live in poverty. The PRI controls the farmers, industrial and government workers by giving them the right to have a job, and a minimum wage, the country average of which is about $6.00 a day.

Why hasn't the PRI done more for the poor? The PRI says because Mexico's population growth rate has been one of the highest in the world, it can't keep up. (About 50% of the population is under 18 years of age.) Also the drop in oil prices has created deep financial trouble for the government, whose foreign debt is now over US$ 100 billion. This doesn't explain the obvious inequality in incomes; the wealthiest fifth of the Mexican population earns twenty times as much as the poorest fifth.

For the first time in 57 years the PRI is losing some ground to the political opposition. This is not a revolution of the poor, however, but the middle class, represented by the party known as the PAN, Partido de Acción Nacional (The National Action Party). This party looks to U.S. trade for Mexican prosperity, and some of the wealthy, northern industrial cities now have PAN mayors.

So far, the PRI still holds national power securely. But widespread hardship has led to violent outbursts of revolution in the past. If the country explodes once more into chaos and violence, its trade relations with other countries, and its foreign debt will ensure that the results go beyond Mexico and deeply affect its northern neighbours.

RELIGION

For thousands of years before Cortés arrived the Indians of Mexico had been deeply religious. Massive pyramids were built to worship their gods and thousands of lives were sacrificed to please them (see History).

When the Spanish conquered Mexico they saw the Indian religions as evil, and destroyed their temples. The Spanish Catholic friars began to convert the Indians to Christianity. Churches were built, often on the same sites as the destroyed temples and sometimes using the same stones.

The Indians found many similarities between the Catholicism of the Spanish and their own religions. Both had priests, confession of sins, and baptisms. Catholics believed Jesus was born to the Virgin Mary and some Indians believed one of their gods was born to a virgin. The Indians prayed to many gods, and although the Catholics believed in one god, they prayed to many saints. Even the symbol of the cross was shared by Indian and Christian faiths.

The friars noticed that the Indians played music and danced for their gods and they encouraged the Indians to do the same for the Christian God. (This tradition is still practiced today).

In 1531, eleven years after the conquest, an Indian, Juan Diego, who had been converted by the priests, saw a vision of a dark lady. She told him that she was the Virgin Mary and that he must go to the Bishop and tell him that she asked that a church be built where she was standing. The Bishop would not believe him and so she told him to go to the top of the hill and gather the roses he would find there. He gathered them and put them into his *tilma* (cloak). This he took to the Bishop. When he opened his cloak the flowers, which were not known to grow in Mexico, fell out. But more surprising than this was that on the inside of the cloak was an image of the Virgin as if painted there. The people soon built a church in her honour.

Many more Indians accepted Christianity after what came to be known as the miracle of the Virgin of Guadalupe. The new virgin made it easier for the Indians to accept this European religion and make it their own. The miracle was officially recognized by the Roman Catholic Church and the Virgin of Guadalupe became the patron saint of Mexico. Her shrine is the holiest in Mexico. Daily, large crowds come to the Basilica. Many kneel and crawl forward to a spot where they can see the image of Juan Diego's cloak and they pray.

All over Mexico small shrines are found on a hillside or along a roadside so people travelling may stop to pray. Often families have a shrine in their homes where they can pray to a particular saint to whom the family turns in time of need or when it isn't possible to go to church. The shrines often consist of a statue or picture of the saint, flowers, candles, incense and a cross.

As the Indians became Christians, they replaced the old gods with new saints. Every village has a patron saint whose image is displayed in all the village churches. The people expect the saints to save crops, stop epidemics and solve countless problems. Their images are worshipped as divinities rather than merely as symbols of historic saints. The people show their gratitude to the saints by holding annual fiestas to honour them (see Leisure).

Although the Mexican constitution severely limits the power of the Church, for millions of Mexicans the Church provides consolation in the midst of poverty.

PEOPLE

The population of Mexico is about 78 million, making it the world's eleventh most populous nation. Like Canada and the U.S., Mexico has a mixture of people from many countries as well as the native peoples, who were in America centuries before the Europeans arrived.

However, Mexico, because of its geography, climate and history, has developed differently from the rest of North America. Ten times more "Indians" lived in Mexico than in Canada and the U.S. combined. They developed great civilizations (see History). When the Spanish conquered Mexico, they united the different Indian cultures by making Spanish the national language and converting most people to the Catholic faith.

During the 19th and early 20th century, when immigrants came from all over Europe to settle in Canada and the U.S., Mexico hoped to attract settlers as well. But most of Mexico's empty spaces could not be farmed; they were jungles or deserts and the developed areas had their own native labourers. Although in the 1930's people came from Germany, France, the Middle East and England, none came to till the soil. They came seeking business opportunities, mainly in the cities. Many were wealthy and came to be called the "new *criollos.*" The French particularly had a big influence. The French culture was admired and copied. Everything from French furniture to food to fashions still has an influence today on Mexico's more prosperous classes. The English speaking foreigners remained a separate community and were not well-liked. They did not marry into Mexican families.

Today most of the Mexican people are descendants of both Amerindians and the Spanish. The largest Indian group in Mexico are those who speak the Nahuatl language. They live mainly in Mexico City and the valleys around the city.

The next largest group is the Maya language speakers, who live mainly in the Yucatan peninsula, and in the state of Chiapas, in the south.

The Tarahumaras are another group. They are related to the Apaches and live in the mountainous areas of the extreme north-west of Mexico. Their homes are often in caves on steep cliffs next to deep canyons. They are famous for being the fastest runners in both Americas. They practice the sport of pursuing the Mexican stag, but they do not kill it. To them it is a sacred animal. They will study a particular deer, then follow it for days on end, running behind until the animal becomes exhausted and stops, allowing itself to be captured. They then carry it back to the village. The "dance of the stag" is performed. Then the stag is set free.

TARAHUMARA INDIAN

More than half of the Tarahumara children die before the age of five, of malnutrition or disease. The rocky soil of the small parcels of land that the Tarahumara farm provides only meager harvests. Although they herd cattle, sheep and goats and use the manure as fertilizer, they never milk the cows and usually kill their animals only for religious feasts.

Many Indian groups have strong cultural traditions and customs, some of which have been practiced since pre-Columbian times. Most Indian communities keep their dialects, skills in making handicrafts as well as dress, religious beliefs and customs, music and dances. Although communities in some regions are better off than others, most Indians live at a subsistence level, barely making a living and rarely having basic human needs met.

Basic human needs include a balanced diet, a simple house, a clean supply of water, adequate clothing, basic health care and education, simple communication facilities such as a postal system and radio broadcasting, enough energy for fuel and light. They might also include an unpolluted environment and cultural and spiritual well-being.

Mexico's National Institute of Indian Affairs tries to help the Indians improve their standard of living while still holding on to their cultural traditions.

Today if Indians want to progress they must learn to speak and write Spanish, give up their Indian form of dress and leave their plots of land and villages to seek work in nearby towns or cities or even the United States.

"EL OTRO LADO" (THE OTHER SIDE)

To the many tourists who drive across the border from California, Mexico is a good place to buy cheap goods and handicrafts. When night comes and these tourists leave, there is another group of people who are waiting to cross the border.

The border patrol guards are ready for these people. They are the hundreds of illegal immigrants who hope to make it across the border this night to the "land of plenty." One of the reasons they risk this crossing is to find work. If a Mexican can find work in Mexico, he will only make on average $2,000.00 per year, whereas in the U.S. he would make $14,000.00. The desire to leave is strong. Effective patrolling of the 2400 km (1500 mi.) long border is almost impossible, and only 10% to 15% of the people illegally crossing into the U.S. are caught. There are between 7 and 10 million illegal immigrants in the U.S.

On this night, Enrico and his new friends wait for the man who will take them across. Their man has done it many times and knows the best place to cross and where to wait when they get to the other side. Enrico is the youngest of those crossing tonight. Everybody feels very nervous because if the border patrol catches them, they are automatically sent back to Mexico. The decision to go to the United States is a hard one, but for Enrico there seems to be no other choice.

The area where Enrico lives is in the driest part of Mexico. There has been no rain for months and the family is having difficulty getting enough to eat. They have nothing left from the land to take to market to buy other goods. Enrico has finished elementary school and now wants to go to secondary school, but there is no money for books. He thought of moving to one of the areas in Mexico that had better opportunities, such as an oil boom town, but he knew there was not much work for inexperienced young men like himself. Perhaps some of the government's farming assistance plans would come to his town, but he couldn't wait that long.

Enrico's decision to go to the United States was made more easily when he saw a family friend in the town square. This friend, Alfredo, had left Mexico to go to the U.S. with very little money. Here he was ten kilos heavier, with a shiny big car, in new jeans and the best looking cowboy boots Enrico had ever seen. This was all bought with money he made in the United States.

Alfredo said that work in the U.S. was hard, but the money was good. The worst jobs were given to the Mexicans. The Mexicans working in California were always nervous, because if an immigration official came and asked for their working papers and they didn't have them, they were sent back to Mexico. The housing was not very good either. They never complained about their housing or work, because then they might be reported and sent home.

Enrico could not even think of the bad side of things - he could only see the money he could make. He'd have more than enough to do all the things he wanted to do as well as give money to his family. He could only see the dollar signs in his eyes.

Enrico's parents didn't want him to go. They tried to tell him about all the bad things that would happen even before he got across the border. Who would help on the farm? Who would look after the family? These were questions they asked. Enrico told them that unless he went, the family would never make ends meet. He would send money to help support them, and when he returned they would not have to worry about the farm anymore.

Now as Enrico waits to cross the border, he admits to himself that he is afraid. He knows, however, there is no turning back.

GUATEMALAN REFUGEES

Just as many Mexicans flee northward illegally across the U.S. border, so many Guatemalans also cross their northern border to seek refuge in Mexico. The reason most Mexicans leave is to find a job; the Guatemalans leave their home for political reasons. The policies of the military government in Guatemala have forced a large number of people who lived in the countryside to migrate. Most live in camps on the Mexican side of the border. Many, however, are scattered in groups of a few families and are living in the jungles of Chiapas. Some have been taken in by Mexican families who share their few provisions.

Three-quarters of the refugees are children. Most of them are suffering from malnourishment.

Although Mexico has a reputation as a haven for refugees, the huge numbers who are arriving put a strain on government and United Nations' budgets. Some of the refugees have been taken to a remote area of Mexico and are expected to make a living from the barren land. Although this is difficult for them, what the refugees fear most is being expelled from Mexico and having to return to Guatemala.

AGRICULTURE

The 1910 Revolution in Mexico was basically fought so that the land would belong to the people who farm it. At that time only 2% of the population owned 97% of the land. Gradually the land has been redistributed. Now there are generally two types of land ownership: private farms and the *ejido* system, both of which are limited in size by federal law. *Ejidos* are communally owned village lands. (see History). Generally, the size of the *ejidos* gets smaller as you go south in Mexico. In the Indian regions of the south and central plateau, the *ejido* system is mainly used. Whereas in the north, the Yucatan and along the Gulf Coast, there is a trend toward large private estates.

Over the last 30 years Mexican agriculture has had one of the highest growth rates in the world (5% per year). However, at the same time, people in the countryside have become poorer; there is more and more unemployment, and the number of landless *campesinos* (farmers) has exploded - from 1.5 million in the 1950's to more than 14 million in the 1980's.How can this be? In order to find out, let's take a closer look at agriculture in Mexico.

The agricultural regions of Mexico are very different from each other and are defined by the amount of water that is available to each.

1. *Tierra de Riego* - This agricultural region is found just south of the U.S. border. As the rainfall is not enough to grow most crops, irrigation is used. The government has built dams and reservoirs creating large irrigated oases and revolutionizing agriculture in the process. These irrigation schemes, however, benefit only small numbers of Mexico's large-scale farmers - who cultivate farms covering thousands of acres. The small farmers get little benefit from the schemes. Government grants also make possible the chance for large farmers to have tractors, mechanical harvesters and other modern agricultural machines. Also expensive farming techniques have begun which include the use of chemical fertilizers, insecticides and improved plant strains.

Since Mexican fruit is not permitted to be imported to nearby California, the main crop near the border is cotton. Other crops across the northern region include wheat, vegetables - mainly tomatoes and asparagus, and fruits such as avocadoes, oranges and grapefruits. Rice and sugar cane are also important. Most of these crops are canned, frozen or dried in plants owned by Mexican and multinational corporations (U.S. or European companies, which operate all over the world). Much of the fresh fruit and vegetables we get in Canada and the U.S., especially in winter, come from this region.

Although some of these products are sold to well-off Mexicans, most of them are too expensive for the average Mexican family's grocery budget and are exported to get much needed foreign exchange; a field planted with cherry tomatoes can make four times the profit that a field of corn (maize) - the staple food of poorer Mexicans - can make.

2. *Tierra de Arida* - The Dry Country. This region is also found in the north where the rainfall is not enough to grow most crops. Here you will find desert shrub with plants such as the yucca and prickly pear cactus. As you move further south, vast expanses of grassy plains and hills are common.

This area provides rangeland for much of Mexico's livestock. Cattle were introduced here by the Spanish. The land reforms of 1910 have scarcely affected the size of the large *haciendas* here. Because the northern pastures have been overgrazed and the once large areas of nutritious grasslands have now gone to waste, harmful weeds, some of which are poisonous, cause the death of hundreds of cattle each year. Because the pasture is not good quality, it takes many acres of land to graze each animal. Therefore, a very large area is needed to raise a profitable herd. Most of the cattle are imported live to the U.S. and contribute to Mexico's foreign trade.

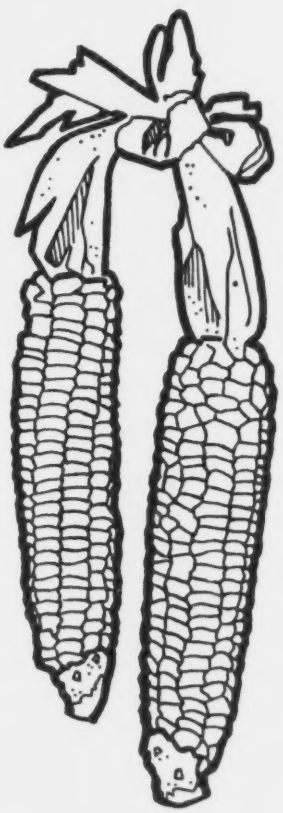
Much of what we know in Canada and the United States of cowboy folklore comes from Mexican cattle ranches and was influenced by Spanish traditions. The western horse saddle used on ranches here is a form of the saddle first used in Mexico. The lariat, rodeo and even the format of Country and Western songs are of Mexican origin.

The Mexican cowboy known as a *vaquero* differs from farm workers in other areas of the country. Some of the differences are - a northerner probably eats a lot of beef and bread made from wheat instead of corn. Also a northerner likely wears factory made boots, blue jeans and a felt cowboy hat (see Dress). He sleeps in a bed (instead of on a mat or in a hammock) and unless he is out on more rugged parts of the range he rides around in a car, truck, jeep or bus. Although his way of life is becoming more common in all parts of the nation, his own land remains one of the prosperous and modern regions of the nation.

3. *The Tierra Temporal* - These lands, found mainly in the Mesa Central, are farmed during the rainy period only. There is usually only enough rain to raise one crop per year.

For thousands of years corn and *frijoles* (beans) were the crops which fed the Indian civilizations in this area. These are still grown today along with squash, chilis, maguey and tomatoes which provide the diet for most of the rural population.

"Slash and burn" cultivation is common in this region. During the dry season the vegetation on certain plots of land is slashed down and burned. The ashes are mixed with the soil to prepare for planting. These plots are used for three or four years before they are left "fallow" to grow over and become fertile enough to be cultivated again. Increasing demands for food put pressure on farmers to reduce the "fallow" time, and are a threat to soil fertility.



Farmers usually rise around 4 a.m. and walk two or three hours to reach their fields. On these farms most of the work is done with a wooden or steel plough drawn by oxen just as it was during colonial times. Few tractors or modern tools are used.

The work cycle consists of four stages: preparing the land, planting, cultivation and harvesting.

Planting starts in early June after the rains have begun. Some farmers still have their seeds blessed by the priest on May 15, the day of San Isidro.

Toward the end of September when the first corn is ripe, the villagers often go to the fields for a celebration during which they roast corn and drink fruit punch. Between late September and early November there is little work in the fields. During this time villagers pick the hog plums, look after the animals and take care of various repair jobs. Harvesting consists of stripping the leaves in early November and picking the dried corn in early December. Each family, sometimes with the aid of hired help, harvests its own fields. By early January most fields are harvested and the corn is stored in storage bins. Usually the corn is left on the cob, with the women shelling only what they need for daily use.

As the population gets larger the farms get smaller and there is more unemployment. Many are not able to make ends meet. Undernourished and often in debt, many are forced to move to the cities to try to find work.

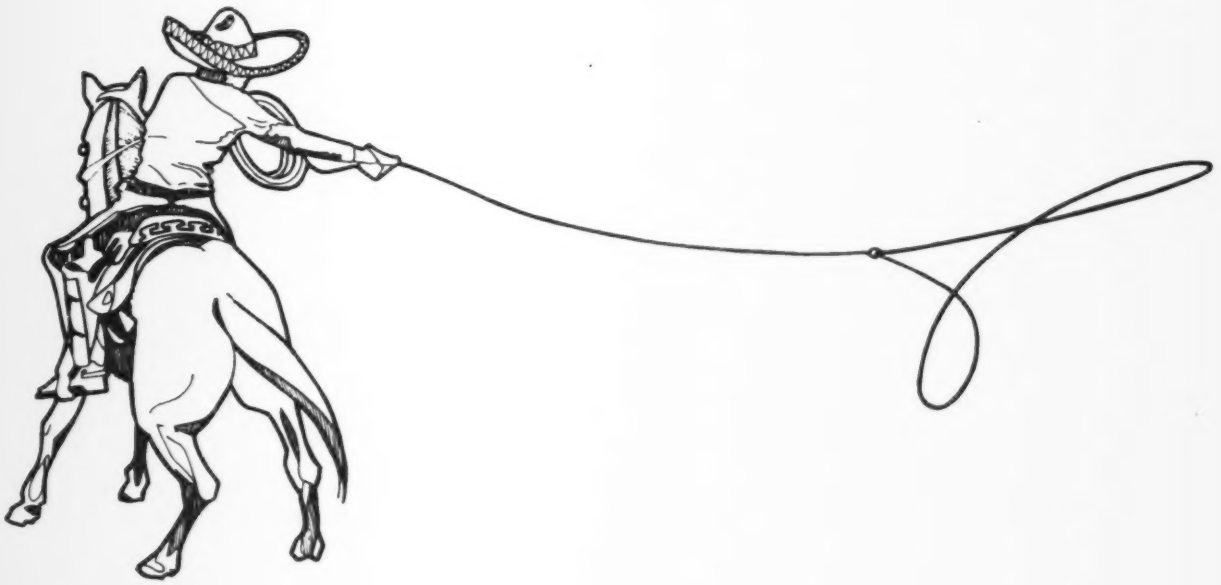
Although the government has programs to help the people trying to make a living from the land, the farmers often resist any help because they believe what has been done for centuries is often best. This is sometimes true. Many of the new seeds were successful in the modern areas of the north. The seeds were very sensitive and needed perfect conditions. The farmers prefer to use the same seeds that have been used for centuries. The risk for them is high. If their crops fail, they may starve, which is the main reason they resist change. Scientists are learning that a combination of the "old" and "new" ways best fits the conditions of the countryside.

4. *Tierra de Jugo Humedad* - meaning 'the land of moist soil,' is found in the south and along the Gulf of Mexico. This area of tropical agriculture can produce three crops per year.

This region produces much of Mexico's coffee, sugar cane, bananas, copra, cacao (chocolate), vanilla, tobacco, rice, pineapple, coconut and citrus fruits. Many of the crops were first cultivated commercially on plantations in colonial days and were gradually taken over as private holdings or *ejidos*.

Good agricultural land in Mexico is very scarce. Two-thirds of the country is mountainous and one-half is too dry to produce crops without irrigation. Only about 15% of Mexico is arable (capable of growing crops) and only about 10% is farmed in any given year.

Mexico will have to work hard to help the *campesinos* (farmers) grow more food on their small plots of land if they are to feed their growing population.



INDUSTRY

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY

A Mexican taxi-driver was complaining to a passenger the other day, "Mexico has lots of oil like the Saudis do. How come they're so rich and we're so poor?"

Well, Mexico doesn't have quite as much oil as the Saudis do. Actually Mexico is about the fourth largest oil producer in the world. Saudia Arabia is number one. But that still means a lot of oil for Mexico. If the taxi passenger had known about the world oil situation he might have explained it to the driver this way.

Most of Saudia Arabia's oil was discovered in the 1940's when it was very cheap to produce. Their oil industry is now well established so that when the price of oil comes way down, they can still make a profit.

Although Mexico has had a petroleum industry for much of this century, the country's big oil discoveries were not made until the late 1970's. Also many of Mexico's oil reserves are off-shore and the expensive new technology that is used means Mexico's oil is costly to produce. Therefore, Mexico makes a much smaller profit than the Saudis.

In 1979 the oil prices were high. Mexico's economy boomed. Everyone believed the price of oil would remain high. The government borrowed money from all over the world from Hong Kong to Brazil to pay for projects to help raise the standard of living of the people of Mexico. They counted on money from oil exports to pay back the money they had borrowed. But in June 1981, the unthinkable happened. World oil prices started to slide. Mexico's profits were severely reduced. To make matters worse, interest rates, or the cost of borrowing money, went up. Mexico could no longer pay back its foreign debt. Although the debt has now been rescheduled to allow Mexico more time to pay, all the income from petroleum sales this year will only go toward paying off the interest of Mexico's US $100 billion foreign debt. Inflation in the country is high - some prices have increased by 100% (that means the price has doubled). The peso was devalued and people's buying power was decreased by 40 per cent. In what other ways have Mexico's large petroleum discoveries affected the people?

The oil boom has been a mixed blessing. On the dark side, roads and pipelines have cut deep gouges across farms. The air and water around refineries has been polluted as thousands of litres of chemicals and metals are released into the environment. Gases have ruined crops. Many farmers left their land saying it was destroyed. Most ended up in the slums of Mexico's cities.

On the other hand, the oil exports did provide money for new schools, health programs, housing projects, roads and jobs which have helped improve life for many Mexicans. The number of middle-class Mexicans has increased.

However, for those Mexicans who are unemployed with either no land or skills, life is still a desperate struggle against poverty.

TOURISM

There is a popular Mexican saying which goes, "Poor Mexico - so close to the United States, so far from God." Mexico's huge foreign debt and the poverty of at least 40% of its citizens may make many wonder just how far away God is, but there is no wondering how far the U.S. is. Everywhere in Mexico, U.S. culture - from Burger Boy to Michael Jackson to American slang - can be found. For the last 50 years Americans have been coming in great numbers to enjoy Mexico's sun, beaches, cities and Indian ruins. In 1985, almost five million tourists contributed more than US$2 billion to Mexico's earnings.

While most tourists come to Mexico City, the government is creating tourism centres along the coastal beaches to attract visitors to its outlying areas.

The Mexican government sees tourism:

- as giving the opportunity for recreation to be enjoyed by all Mexican citizens;
- as creating new wealth for individuals, businesses, companies and communities;
- as providing tax dollars for the government;
- as an important way to create jobs for Mexicans and slow the movement of the rural poor to the industrial cities;
- as a way to bring foreign money into the country;
- as a way of providing development to remote rural areas.

Yet there are many arguments against mass tourism. It often does more damage to people than it benefits them. Tourism causes pollution and inflation, causing high rises in prices of everything from food to housing. It destroys cultural and moral values and increases the distance between the rich and poor.

Many of the visitors come to Acapulco, which is situated in Mexico's poorest state. Acapulco's money has brought thousands of poor Mexicans to the resort. The original population has grown fifty times, nearly all to service the tourist trade.

Mexicans, arriving to take up jobs as chamber maids, bell boys, waiters and taxi drivers, found nowhere to live. Many joined the shanty towns on the hillside. They had no electricity or plumbing. Tens of thousands lived in miserable conditions while looking down on wealth and luxury.

In 1980, authorities moved 200,000 people to a new out-of-sight town behind a hill, where the poverty would not be visible to tourists. From the new town a constant stream of buses makes the half-hour trip to the resort.

Juan Huerta, who sells his handicrafts on the beach, says he finds the *gringos* very strange. "They say they have come to see the country, but they are blind to the real Mexico. They spend all their time in discos, eating hamburgers and never bother to get to know us. It's like me going to Chicago and asking for tacos."

With such wealth and poverty found together, crime is often a problem. Tourism officials are determined to make Acapulco a cleaner and safer place for tourists.

In the tourist centres there are many Mexicans who can speak English, but can't write Spanish. It is very difficult to keep up Mexican traditions under these circumstances.

Since the 1985 Mexican earthquake disaster, thousands of tourists have cancelled their travel plans to Mexico. Although most of the tourist areas are far from the quake centre, tourist visits were down by almost half.

The World Cup Football (Soccer) Matches held in June 1986 brought many tourists back. Mexico is relying heavily on its tourism industry for the future to help pay back its US$ 100 billion foreign debt.

MAQUILADORAS - Foreign Owned Assembly Plants

> Wanted: Women betwen 16 and 25 years of age, single, no children, Grade 6 to 10 education and at least 6 months residence in Mexicali, wanted to work in electronic assembly plant. Apply to 125 Negrite St.

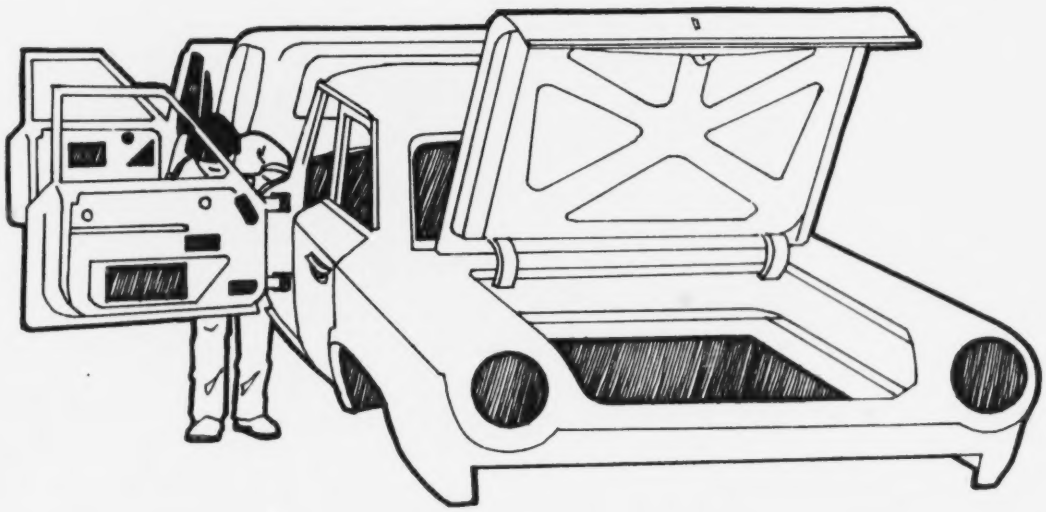
Sandra Gomez, who is 18, saw this ad in a Mexicali newspaper, decided to apply, and was hired. She lives with her parents, two brothers and two sisters in Mexicali, near the U.S./Mexico border.

Sandra said, "I quit my last job in a clothing factory because the pay was too low and I have to support my family, since my father and my brothers are unable to find work. It was impossible to make ends meet on such low wages. It wasn't worth all the hard work and stress. I had to get up at five a.m. to catch the bus at 6 a.m. for the hour's drive to the industrial park where the plant was located. I worked until six at night and still had the trip home to make. There were few chances for promotion. I worked there for one year. Most women stay at a factory job for about three years and then leave to get married."

"My new job at the electronic assembly plant doesn't pay much more, but it is closer to home. I am now earning more than minimum wage, which is under US$ 1 per hour. (Mexican workers earn less in a day than an American worker earns in the U.S. in an hour for the same job.) There is a lot of stress on the job. We have to produce so many microchips each day. I get bad headaches and do not feel well a lot of the time, but the job is worth it. The family has to eat. Conditions are a bit better here than they were at the plant where I worked before. Because of the competition for workers here, my factory offers small bonuses if our attendance is good. They also provide athletic facilities, holidays and parties. We would prefer higher wages. It's impossible for us to live on my wage and eat nutritionally."

Sandra is one of about 100 workers, mostly young women, who work at the plant. She spends her working hours leaning over a microscope as the parts she works with are too small to see with normal vision.

There are 300,000 Mexicans who work in these assembly plants, many of which are owned by U.S. companies such as RCA, Sylvania, Xerox, Chrysler, Ford, General Motors and General Electric. These plants assemble, not only electronics and cars, but clothing, toys, electrical appliances, and furniture, as well as many other things. These goods are sometimes sold in Mexico, but usually are sent back to the U.S. or to a different country to be sold.



American companies looking for higher profits often set up these plants in Mexico. Here they can pay their workers much lower wages than anywhere in the U.S.. Because the raw materials come from the U.S., their customs duties and taxes are not high.

Situated just over the Mexican border, the *maquiladoras* are not far from large U.S. cities where the goods are sold. Also, the electricity it takes to run the factories is cheap in Mexico.

Maquiladoras are Mexico's second largest source of income. They bring in US$ 1.5 billion per year.

MANUFACTURING

"Hecho en Mexico" means "Made in Mexico." Each year more and more products bought in Mexico have this stamp. Mexico produces many of the things its people want to buy these days. These include processed food; beverages, such as soft drinks, beer, and tequila; textiles, usually made from the cotton grown in the north; paper and wood products; drugs; chemicals and cement. Mexico also produces much of its own iron and steel, TV sets, washing machines and refrigerators, electric generators, pumps and automobiles, along with many other things.

Mexicans need to make these things for themselves and save their dollars for what they can't yet make. Each year two million more Mexicans are born. To provide the goods needed to support the growing population, industry will have to expand and increase its output.

However, a growing problem facing Mexico is the concentration of industry in the major cities - Mexico City, Monterrey and Guadalajara. This causes much pollution and overcrowding in these areas. People who can't make a living in the countryside flood to these cities looking for work in the factories.

The industries are kept in these areas because power and water are cheaper. The transportation facilities are better; there are more skilled workers and it is easier to get credit.

Mexico wants to encourage more industry in the countryside. To do this the government would need to lower the local taxes, provide better transportation and cheap energy - oil, gas and electricity.

'HECHO en MEXICO'

COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

The traditional handicrafts industries that have been practised since colonial times or before, still provide incomes or add to the incomes of many of Mexico's rural people. These home occupations include pottery making, weaving, woodworking, basket making and many others.

Different villages or households specialize in particular handicrafts. The special ways of making the crafts are handed down from one generation to the next.

These crafts are sold in village markets, although many are now being sent to the cities for the tourist trade, or exported to Canada, the U.S. and Europe.

CITIES

THE COLONIAL CITY

Each time the Spanish conquered a new area of New Spain they would build a city from where they could govern the area. Aside from being a centre of administration, the city also was the seat of the high clergy, the headquarters of the army, and the centre for banking and selling local produce and crafts.

Most of the cities in Mexico were founded in the sixteenth century. Charles V of Spain gave instructions for city planning which recommended the chessboard plan. The advantages of this grid plan were that the streets could be set out rapidly and the tax burden shared equally. Usually the site for the city was chosen with care. First of all the foundation stone of the church was laid as the centre of the future settlement. This was followed by the laying out of streets and blocks. The streets were 30 feet wide with a central draining ditch. In many cities avenues of poplars were planted. At the centre of each city was a plaza now called the *zócalo*. These bare squares centuries later were turned into parks with shady trees and often with a band-stand in the middle. This is where people stroll in the evenings to the music of a *marimba* or *mariachi* band.

Surrounding this square were the main church, government headquarters, the city hall, the town houses of mine and *hacienda* owners, and department stores.

The dominating feature of Mexican cities is their churches. Often they are magnificent landmarks visible from a long way off. During the colonial period about 12,000 churches were built in Mexico.

GUADALAJARA

Much of what we think of as Mexican has its roots in the state of Jalisco, that has as its capital the city of Guadalajara. *Mariachis, sombreros,* the *siesta, charredas* (rodeos) and bull fights are all traditions of Guadalajara.

MARIACHIS

Nuno Beltran de Guzman, the cruelest of the conquistadores, came north to Jalisco to subdue the nomadic hunting tribes who were wild and fierce compared to the settled agricultural peoples of the south. He finally conquered the Indians in 1532 and founded Guadalajara, naming it after his birthplace in Spain. Ten years later Spain sent instructions that a city of plazas, wide boulevards, churches and fountains was to be built on that site. Guadalajara's ties to Spain have always been strong, but it is mainly a Mexican city, a combination of Indian and Spanish. The citizens of Guadalajara call themselves *tapatios,* which has come to mean culture, pride, honour, gentility, and beauty.

The city, Mexico's second largest with a population of almost two million, has managed to keep its beauty in spite of industrialization. It is known as the "City of Roses." However, owing to its many freeways and factories, pollution is a big problem.

Guadalajara is also an important commercial and agricultural centre. One of the largest shopping centres in Latin America, called the Plaza del Sol, is located here. The city also has Mexico's largest market. While many Mexican markets are thought of as being quaint and old, here the emphasis is on cleanliness and efficiency. It is in a huge modern building with roof parking for more than 400 cars. It is almost a city within a city and has a nursery school, gym and post office. Mountains of produce and rows of flowers are on sale. As well, hundreds of shops and stalls offer every type of merchandise. At Christmas there is a separate section for toys and piñatas.

Guadalajara is known of as the home of the *mariachis,* the strolling musicians. Most experts say *mariachi* is from the French word, *mariage,* meaning marriage. Apparently the bands often performed at weddings when Maximilian and Carlotta ruled (see History). The musicians dress in a combination of the Spanish riding costume and the working clothes of the *vaquero* (cowboy). The *mariachis* gather in the square named after them, the Plaza de Mariachi, in the heart of Guadalajara.

Charreadas (riding exhibitions) are more popular among the *tapatios* of Guadalajara than anywhere else in the country. Here many of the best *charros* (riders) are found. The *charro* costumes must follow certain rules. The costumes originated in Spain and the *conquistadores* brought *charro* traditions with them. The *sombrero* is made of felt or woven palm, with a wide brim and may be decorated with gold or silver braid. The shirt is usually cotton and is sometimes embroidered. The tie, which is usually red, brown or gray, has long flowing tails. The *charro's* trousers are tightly fitted and decorated with gold or silver buttons along the outer seam. His boots are made of a single piece of leather.

The *charro* must be able to show his skill as a horseman. Several of the tests of skill are similar to those seen in U.S. or Canadian rodeos, since many cowboys learned their skills from the Mexican *vaquero* (cowboy); the *charro* (rider), though, must execute his moves with the grace of a dancer.

MEXICO CITY

The Mexicans simply call their capital city México. Officially it is México, D.F. The D.F. stands for District Federale (Federal District). In English it is called Mexico City, but whatever name you use, this city ranks as one of the great cities of the world.

México is the world's largest city with more than 18 million residents. Situated in the centre of the Valley of Mexico at an altitude of 2,238 m (about 7,000 ft., or almost 1.5 mi. - almost 2.5 km) above sea level, it is also among the world's highest capitals, and the only major city in the world that is completely landlocked by mountains with no major river running nearby.

CATHEDRAL, ZÓCALA, MEXICO CITY

Mexico City was built here because this was once Tenochititlán, the heart of the Aztec empire (see History). The heart of the city is the *Zócalo,* the enormous square where the Great Temple and Moctezuma's Palace once stood. Around the *Zócalo* are the National Cathedral, the City Hall, the president's office and the National Pawnshop.

This area lies on what was the bed of Lake Texcoco and as such is extremely wet. Pumping water has caused the city to sink as much as 9 m (29.5 ft.) during the twentieth century. Each time a city worker digs a ditch for a gas pipe or a telephone line his shovel usually strikes something of the past.

México is one of the world's most beautiful capitals. It was laid out by the Spanish and alterations have been made over the years. The most famous of these has been the Paseo de la Reforma. Maximilian (see History) wanted his capital to have a wide boulevard equal to the Champs Élysées of Paris. Today his Reforma is one of the attractions of the city and one of the world's great boulevards. It is an eight-laned street bordered by brightly lit skyscrapers.

Along the Reforma you will find the Zona Rosa. Here there are open-air cafes, gourmet restaurants and expensive shops.

The November 1985 earthquake destroyed much of the Reforma area - many buildings are now useless. Great numbers were demolished and although many may not have fallen down completely, their structure is damaged - perhaps they have broken pipes or gas leaks - people can no longer live in them. This is a middle-class area and many people whose homes were destroyed were taken in by relatives, but many joined the poor who live on the streets. Despite the fact that they were given tents and large numbers of blankets - as a result of the cold December and January temperatures, many deaths were caused from pneumonia.

As you continue along Reforma you will reach Chapultepec Park. This is where Moctezuma once had his summer residence, which was surrounded by gardens for his private use. Today the park is open to everyone and on an average weekend more than a million people enjoy themselves here.

Although México can be a very impressive place to live with its pleasant climate, historic churches, beautiful public squares, the ballet, opera, theatres, and art galleries, it also has an undesirable side.

It is one of the most polluted cities in the world. Every day 11,000 tons of metals, chemicals, bacteria and dust pour into the air and remain there, trapped by the mountains which circle the city. The air is thin and yellow. On bad days it is difficult to see beyond five blocks. It is very crowded. Many people from the countryside come to the city; every day about 1,600 people arrive. Some find jobs. Many roam through the traffic selling pens and candies and flowers.

Other problems include a shortage of water, traffic-clogged streets, an electrical system that often flickers and fails, inefficient telephone and mail services, a rising crime rate. Some 7 million people live in the city's slums. During the rainy season many roads turn to mud and the water trucks cannot come to fill the barrels outside people's homes. For days the water truck doesn't come at all and the people don't even have water to drink. So they go to the market and there it costs 20 pesos ($.05) for a bucket of water.

Despite México's many problems, people are still flocking to Mexico's capital - whether they are tourists eager to see World Cup football games, or families who can no longer survive in the countryside.

OAXACA

To travel from Mexico City to the city of Oaxaca is to have great respect for the Aztec troops and traders who made the journey on foot. There are no broad valleys or flat plateaus to follow for any distance. The only way to go was up and down, up and down for 400 km (250 mi.) over mountains. The terrain is rugged and difficult every metre of the way. Yet the Aztecs had conquered the area and opened up routes to trade with the Zapotecs and Mixtecs who live in the Oaxaca area.

Oaxaca was the home of two of Mexico's most important leaders: Juárez and Díaz (see History). Although Oaxaquenos are very proud of Juárez and his home is now a museum, they would rather forget Díaz as he is not well-thought-of throughout Mexico.

Lying hidden in the lush green mountains of the southern highlands, Oaxaca is a city of open plazas and narrow streets. More than 100,000 people live here; the majority of them still speak their Indian languages. In the market place the Zapotec and Mixtec women still sell their *atole* as they have always done, pouring the gruel into colourful hand-carved gourds. Much of what goes on in the daily lives of the people of Oaxaca has been going on since the time of Cortés.

However, as in many areas of Mexico, recently there has been some political unrest. Thousands of small farmers have been marching to the government offices to protest low farm prices paid for their produce and rising prices they must pay for what they buy. Inflation is about 100 percent per year. So there is a constant struggle to keep their incomes up to the rising prices.

To make extra money most of the people in the farming villages around Oaxaca make handicrafts. These range from the famous black pottery, to blankets, *serapes* and *rebozos* (shawls). Often these are sold by small children, as everybody in the family must make a contribution.

Every evening in Oaxaca there is a one-hour blackout while the electricity is turned off. In the *zócalo,* waiters bring out candles, shopkeepers light gas lamps and shoppers read price tags by matchlight. If a politician is making a speech, the plug is pulled and he is left to shout his message.

HOUSING

RURAL

Almost all Mexicans who live in the countryside live in villages. The isolated farmhouse which is common in Canada, the U.S. or Europe, is almost unknown in Mexico.

The geography, climate and history of a region often determine what the villages look like. The roofs in dry regions are usually flat and in rainy areas are slanted. Years ago, thatched roofs were found in most areas. Then during colonial times red clay tiles were one of the most common forms of roofing. Lately, tin or zinc roofs, though not as attractive, are becoming most popular.

In some areas houses are made with a frame of reeds. The reeds are woven and then covered with clay to form the walls.

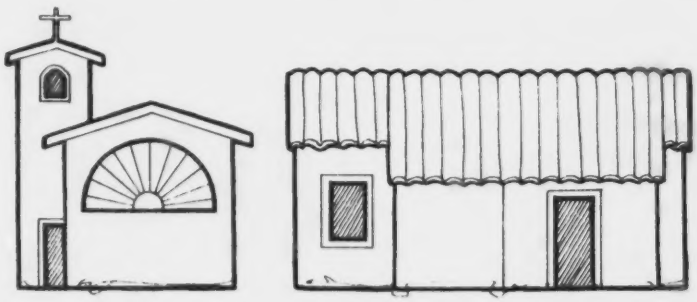
The most common type of rural home, though, is made of *adobe*. To make *adobe* bricks, first the soil is gathered and mixed with water and straw. Then the bricks are formed in wooden rectangles often 30 cm by 61 cm (12 in. by 24 in.) These are laid out in the sun. Finally they are piled up in small pyramids about 3 metres (10 ft.) high. Branches are piled on the ground beside the pyramids and burned. The heat and smoke penetrate the bricks and harden them almost completely.

The colour of *adobe* varies with the colour of the local clay, from almost black to almost white to orange-red or brown.

The earth of most of the drier regions of Mexico is perfect for making *adobe*. People have their building material right on their own land; it costs nothing and it does not even have to be transported. Homes built with *adobe* walls are strong and solid; they are cool in summer, warm in winter, and can withstand heavy rain storms.

The living space for the rural family is usually in one or two rooms. The main room may be about 4 m (12 ft.) wide and about three times as long. This room probably serves as a kitchen (which could also be a separate room or outbuilding) bedroom, living room, pantry, closet, storeroom and tool shed.

Beds in Mexico come in a variety of forms from the simple sleeping mat, to a hammock, used mostly in the hotter low-lying areas, to a raised platform. Beds such as are used in Canada and the U.S. are becoming more popular and there may be the occasional brass bed.



The corral, where the animals are kept, is an important part of the rural home. Many are enclosed on three sides by stone walls or perhaps cacti; the house would provide the fourth wall. Sometimes the corral has trees to shade the animals.

Nearer the centre of the towns and some villages, and around the central plazas, the homes tend to be larger and are built in the colonial style. They have ceramic tile roofs, and arches are a popular architectural style. Many are built around a central courtyard.

However simple or luxurious the home, flowers are usually an important part of the setting. Often they are planted in pots or kerosene cans and might include anything from geraniums and carnations to violets, bougainvillea and sweet-smelling jasmine.

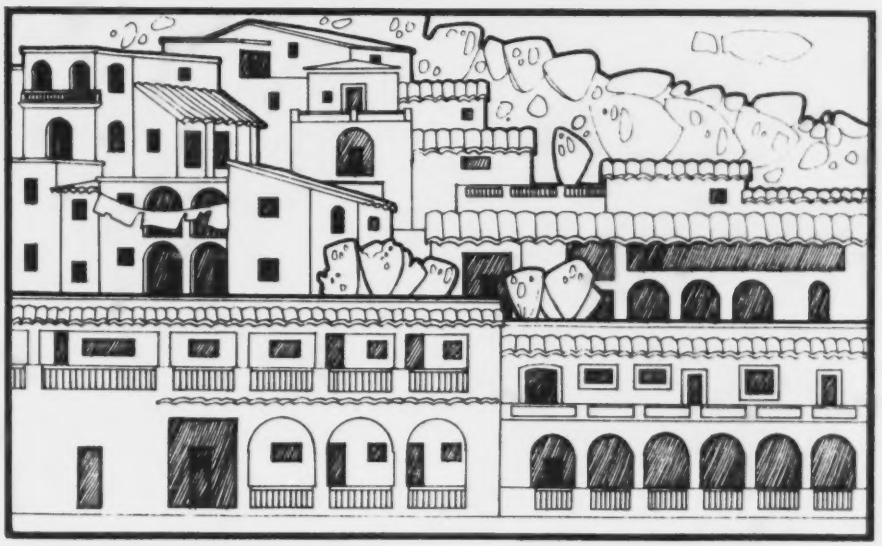
URBAN

Mexico's cities generally have low to mid-rise houses and apartments and they are usually made of brick or concrete or concrete covered with bright or pastel-coloured stucco.

Because of the tremendous number of people (1,600) moving into Mexico City every day, the capital has a severe housing shortage. The government has tried to provide subsidized housing. Large government highrises provide homes for thousands of families. However, millions cannot be provided for. Massive numbers of people cannot find suitable housing. As a result squatter settlements have developed all around the city. Most of the people migrating from the countryside end up in one of the city's 500 slums or build a new "lost city" of corrugated tin shanties. These homes are hammered together from cardboard cartons, wrecked cars, and discarded and sometimes stolen building and industrial materials. Once the families build shelters, they tap the public electricity and get water from the tank trucks.

The overcrowding and often unsatisfactory conditions of housing in Mexico would be much worse if it were not for Mexico's good weather. Sunny days make it possible for people to be outside for much of the day. In the winter though, there are many deaths from pneumonia or overexposure in the long, cold nights.

Mexico's cities also have exclusive residential districts with some of the world's most interesting architecture. In Mexico City some of these fashionable districts include Las Lomas (The Hills), San Angel, a beautiful, unspoilt colonial suburb, and El Pedregal, where some of the city's most modern homes are landscaped into a rocky terrain of black lava.



FAMILY LIFE

"I think all children should be born Mexican and remain so until they are fifteen." This was the opinion of a famous traveller in Mexico. The reason for his sympathetic feelings toward Mexico's children is their general good behavior - they seldom cry or quarrel. Children are a source of family pride and, therefore, are highly valued.

Mexican children are taught to be polite, respect their elders and obey their parents.

FAMILY ROLES

In Mexico family ties are very strong and loyalty to the family comes first. Often grandparents live with the parents and children and there are close family bonds with cousins and distant relatives. Most families are large and the average number of children per family is five. Usually family members live together, work together and spend their leisure time together. After church on Sundays and on holidays, families visit relatives, go on picnics together or stroll arm in arm around the central plazas of cities and towns.

The father is head of the family unit. In Mexico men are expected to be strong and have *machismo,* which means the strength to withstand life's problems and protect the family honour. The husband makes the business decisions and is looked to for leadership within the family.

The mother cares for the home and the children. In the past, women did not work outside the home, except in the marketplace, because men were expected to support the family. Today, however, it is more common for Mexican wives to have jobs. Most middle-class families have servants to cook and clean house. The mother is considered the heart of the family. Mother's Day is time for a big celebration in Mexico. Everyone has a half-day holiday to show their appreciation to their mother, by giving her gifts.

The first-born child in the family has control over the other children. Most Mexican children are named after a Catholic saint. Children celebrate their Saint's Day, which is more important to them than their own birthday. When a child is baptized, his parents choose *padrinos* or godparents for the child. These godparents develop close bonds with the family and may provide advice or financial help, if the family is in difficulty. If there are many children in a family, there will be many godparents and the family will form close ties with the community.

DATING AND MARRIAGE

In the past, boys and girls were not allowed to date freely. A boy had to arrange a date with the mother of his *novia* (steady girlfriend) first, and they were always chaperoned, or accompanied when together by an older female member of the girl's family. Although this practice is not followed much today, especially in the larger cities, in some small towns many old dating customs still persist.

In small towns in Mexico boys and girls meet during a *paseo*. Groups of girls circle the town plaza while the boys pass them walking in the opposite direction. The boys flirt with the girls and pay them flattering compliments, which are ignored. The parents and relatives of the young people watch from the sides while chatting among themselves.

It is also still common for a young man to hire a *mariachi* band with violins, guitars and horns to serenade his sweetheart, or he himself may sing ballads under her window in the evening accompanied on his guitar.

In rural Indian villages marriages may be arranged by parents. Married couples here do not receive community decision-making participation until after their first child is born.

Although many traditional dating and marriage customs are becoming outdated in most of Mexico, their influence is still noticeable.

MAÑANA

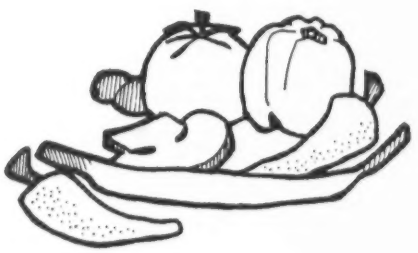
The pace of life is slower in Mexico than in other parts of North America. Many Mexicans do not care for the hustle and hurry attitude of colder climates, but prefer a more relaxed, easy-going lifestyle. It is not necessary to apologize for being tardy in Mexico until one is up to half an hour late for an arranged appointment. People stop to chat and relax with friends and relatives at outdoor cafes. Especially in the southern states where it is hot, many offices and shops close for two hours in the afternoon so people can go home to have their *comida*, the main meal of the day, be with family and perhaps have a *siesta* (afternoon nap).

Mexicans are very affectionate people. Upon meeting friends or family, they are not shy in showing their delight, and embrace each other with sincerity. Mexicans are also highly esteemed for their politeness. The attitude of *mañana* or 'tomorrow'gives Mexicans the opportunity to enjoy time together. It is an important aspect of Mexican lifestyle.

FOOD

Over the last few years Mexican foods have been becoming more and more popular all over North America. Supermarkets carry whole sections of fresh, canned, packaged and frozen Mexican foods. Mexican restaurants can be found in most North American cities and towns. But to many Canadians and Americans, Mexican food means tacos, chile or maybe even nachos. However, the versions we get here are probably not Mexican creations.

Authentic Mexican food can be as simple as *tamales* (cornmeal dough with a sweet or savory filling - steamed in corn husks) or as complicated as *mole poblano* (turkey or chicken cooked in a sauce of some thirty ingredients, the most important of which include dark chocolate and chilis).



FOOD CROPS

Mexicans have had thousands of years to develop a complex and interesting cuisine. The most important food crops of the ancient Mayas (see History) were corn, *frijoles* (beans), squash and chili (still the basis of life for millions of Mexicans). These plants provided the Mesoamerican Indians with a fairly well-balanced diet. Corn provides the starch or carbohydrate needed; it is also rich in oil and protein. Beans give the protein element, mostly taking the place of meat. Squash offers a variety of vitamins, not only in the squash itself, but in its seeds and flowers. Chilis which are high in vitamin C give zest to the otherwise bland diet.

The importance of corn to the Mayan people can be shown by the following legend. It is told that when the Mayan gods decided it was time for people to inhabit the earth, they first tried to make them out of mud and then wood and rushes. But these people didn't quite work and the gods had to try again. This time they settled on making man from corn. Apparently this worked so well the people became dangerously close to becoming gods themselves. Their creators, fearing the competition, blew a mist into their eyes to cloud their vision so they could see only what was near to them and not know more than they needed to.

When the Spanish conquered Mexico, they were very impressed with the food that was prepared for Moctezuma. Along with the corn, beans, squash and chilis were many other foods unknown to the Europeans. These included: chocolate, made into a dark foaming hot beverage, vanilla, peanuts, turkey, avocados, eggplant, tomatoes, sweet potatoes and fruit such as papaya and pineapple.

The Spanish gradually added these new foods to their diets. But in time, the *conquistadores* contributed their own foods. Some of these were: wine, pork, beef, chicken, onions, garlic, dairy products, wheat, rice, potatoes and olive oil. Spanish cooks also taught the Indians to fry food. Before they had cooked on dry griddles. This change in cooking styles led to many Mexican foods today being fried rather than baked or boiled.

During the reign of Maximilian (1864-67), many French, Austrian and Italian dishes were added to Mexican cuisine. Nevertheless, corn still dominates Mexican cooking even today. Corn is an important ingredient in thousands of Mexican dishes, and cornmeal (*masa harina*), and water are the only ingredients of the *tortilla,* a round flat pancake which is the staple food of the country. The *tortilla* has remained unchanged; it is the same bread the ancient Mayas ate, only now instead of being patted out by hand, most housewives use a press or buy them from the tortilla bakeries.

Many millions of these thin, golden pancake-like breads are eaten each day in Mexico. They are eaten plain and with butter, and fried for chips. One of the more popular dishes, *enchiladas,* are soft *tortillas* rolled around a filling and served hot with a sauce. *Tacos* are *tortillas* folded over a filling, sometimes left soft and sometimes fried crisp, and eaten like a sandwich. In the north large wheat *tortillas* are folded around a filling like an envelope and are called *burritos.* But most important, hardly any meal is served without a basket of fresh *tortillas,* still hot, to accompany it.

Mexican cooking can be very spicy. In Mexico the food that is second only to corn is the chili, which is grown in hundreds of varieties, each different in colour, size and hotness. The market place of every village has a space provided for chilis, both fresh and dried, from the smallest red ones that are like little flames, to the mildest, large green ones. They have poetic names like *serrano, poblano, jalapeno, cascabella* and *pasilla.*

Some kind of freshly made chili sauce, *salsa* is always found on the tables of both homes and restaurants. It is as important to Mexican cooking as salt. People can use as much or as little as they want of it. The chilis can be very hot and can only be cooled off, not by drinking any cold beverage, but by eating *tortillas.* One Mexican child once asked his mother, "Why do Mexicans eat such hot food?" She thought a while and answered: "Because it tastes so good."

DRESS

The traditional dress of Mexican women is based on a costume created by a Chinese girl who lived in the Mexican city of Puebla. The story goes: In the year 1606 a girl was born into a prosperous family living in a sea-coast town of Southern China. She grew into a beautiful girl with romantic ideas of seeing other parts of the world. An opportunity came for her to make a voyage down the coast and her parents permitted her to go. During the voyage the boat was attacked by pirates and the girl was taken prisoner. She was eventually taken to the Philippines, where she was sold to a Spanish sea-captain and taken to the port of Acapulco in New Spain. From there she ended up in Puebla, where she was adopted by a Mexican family and raised as their daughter. She dressed in a peasant blouse and embroidered skirt and worked among the poor. Her dress came to be copied by the poorer girls of the town. The fashion spread and became popular and was known thereafter as the China-Poblana - the Chinese girl of Puebla. This costume is worn mainly at festivals and other special occasions.

In the south of Mexico, where the weather is usually hot, the Maya women, both in the country and in the cities, wear a dress called the *huipil*. It is a simple cotton shift-like garment hanging loosely to mid-calf. It is usually short-sleeved, and coloured embroidery borders the square neck.

In the highlands the Indian women usually wear hand-woven heavy woolen wraparound skirts which are belted and topped with a blouse.

No matter what part of Mexico the women live in though, they wear the *rebozo* - a long straight shawl. These can be made of cotton, wool or even silk. Mexicans can usually tell where a woman is from, by how she ties her *rebozo*.

HUIPIL DRESS

Traditional dress for men in rural Mexico includes white unbleached cotton trousers called *calzones.* They resemble the lower part of a pair of pajamas, and are much more practical and comfortable than regular trousers. In a land of mud and streams, they can be rolled up above the knee and kept clean and dry. The men wear these with collarless white shirts with sleeves gathered into wristbands. On the east coast men wear an open-collared loose-fitting shirt called *guayabera.* Often there is embroidery down the front. Wide brimmed hats known as *sombreros,* and leather sandals with rubber-tire soles called *huaraches* are still popular today. In areas where the temperature dips low, especially at night, the *serape* is worn. This garment is like a heavily woven woolen blanket with a slit for the head in the centre. When not in use the men fold the *serape* and wear it over one shoulder.

People who live in the large cities tend to be even more fashion conscious than the average Canadian or American. Women in the northern cities often follow U.S. fashions. The women in Mexico City buy more European designs and tend to dress up more than most other North American women. Women in the southern Mexican states usually follow the latest fashions in Mexico City.

HEALTH

The pre-Hispanic peoples of Mexico had a considerable amount of empirical medical knowledge. They practiced medicine using herbal remedies; they were aware of the main functions of the human body and they sterilised their medical instruments with fire. After the Spanish conquest several hospitals were founded; one of which, the Hospital de la Concepcion de Nuestra Señora in Mexico City (1521) is still in existence as a modern hospital. Other hospitals were run by the nuns of religious orders.

In recent years vast improvements in public health in Mexico have eliminated many of the diseases that had in the past reached epidemic proportions. These improvements, along with skilled medical care, have extended the life expectancy of men to 64 years and women to 68 years. (In 1940 the life expectancy was just over 40 years.) This, coupled with fewer infant deaths, has given Mexico one of the world's most rapidly growing populations, although nearly 50% of the population is undernourished. Many Mexicans go to herbalists or use traditional herbal remedies for their medical problems. This is especially common in the countryside where medical facilities are scarce or people don't realize they can get medical care free if they can't afford to pay. Also, many put their trust in herbal remedies which have been used for centuries.

Over the last few years health hazards in Mexico have changed. "Diseases of the developed world" are becoming more common. More Mexicans are suffering from heart disease, diabetes, cancer and high blood pressure.

Another health problem is caused by the medical drug industry. Drugs are sold without a doctor's prescription and without supervision of anyone with medical knowledge. This often results in needless expense because people often take drugs, especially antibiotics, which will not cure the condition they have. Taking these drugs builds up an immunity by the disease organisms so that the drugs are useless when they are needed.

In Mexico City pollution is causing untold health problems, with 131,000 industries and almost three million motor vehicles contaminating the air. Living in the capital is equivalent to smoking two packs of cigarettes a day. Medical researchers estimate that about 40 percent of the city's population suffer from chronic bronchitis and that thousands die each year from diseases caused by pollution.

MURAL, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO

Almost daily the Mexican newspapers warn about the dangers of pollution to pregnant women and unborn children. When the air gets really bad some pregnant women and mothers with small children go to the countryside until the weather clears.

Apparently, even jogging can be hazardous to your health. Some doctors warn that the air is so bad people should try not to breathe too deeply. "When you live here, it's better only to exhale," is a Mexico City joke.

EDUCATION

Maria Correa is a thirteen-year-old student in Mexico City . In June, she finished Grade six of primary school and this fall she will be entering secondary school. The 47 pupils in Maria's class studied reading and writing, which is in Spanish in Mexico. They also learned arithmetic, history, geography, science, English, music and art. Discipline in Mexico's schools is generally strict and all pupils are silent when the teacher speaks.

Although there were no computers or videos used in teaching at Maria's school, they often saw films and slide-tapes.

For Maria, classes began at eight in the morning and continued till noon. Lunch break took place from 12 till two, when classes resumed again. School finished each day at five p.m.

Primary school is free and compulsory in Mexico. Not only is the tuition free, but also books, materials and often breakfasts. In spite of this, it is difficult for many of the poorer children to stay in school and many drop out. Many children in Mexico City are homeless. Perhaps their families have recently moved to the city and have not yet found a home; or their mother works and doesn't have the time to make sure they're in school; or the children are also needed to work to support the family; or maybe the mother has remarried and her new husband isn't interested in providing for her children. These social problems make life very difficult for Mexico's poorer children.

Children must have good marks before they can pass to a higher grade in school. For each subject pupils are given a grade from one to ten. Six is considered a pass.

Maria had an average of eight out of ten when she completed primary school. Now she is looking forward to secondary school. If she completes her three years successfully she will then enter high school for an additional three years.

When she goes to school in September, Maria will wear a pink uniform with a sporty short skirt. Sports are an important part of the school program. Maria's new school has a swimming pool and she wants to improve her diving. She will also play soccer and volleyball.

This year she will begin to study some elementary algebra, physics and biology. She is looking forward to taking home economics and art, which is her favourite subject.

Some day Maria would like to go to university. The National University of Mexico was founded about four hundred and thirty-five years ago. It was moved to its new site in the 1950s and now about 110,000 students attend the institution.

Maria's school also teaches trades such as printing and electronics along with other technical subjects. Many of the children who take these subjects go on to vocational or technical schools - the largest of which is in Monterrey. Other schools teach typing and English, both of which help people get jobs.

Of the many private schools in Mexico some are run by the Catholic Church and others by foreign cultural groups.

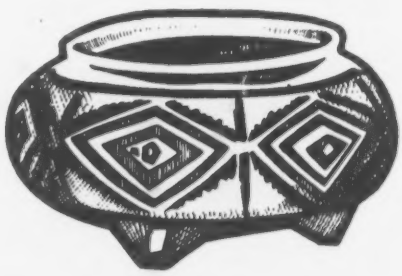
THE ARTS

Dry and barren in many ways, the land of Mexico has always been very fruitful in the arts. Whether a temple carving of a thousand years ago, a mural of Mexico's revolution or a simple functional pot made by a craftsman today - all show an inseparability of art and life itself.

PRE-COLUMBIAN ART

Many centuries before Europeans discovered America, Amerindian civilizations were rich in art and architecture. Their structures were decorated with sculptures, stucco reliefs and mural paintings, which told their history. One of the foremost ancient civilizations was the Toltec. Their name, in the old Nahuatl language meant "artist." The famous legendary king of the Toltecs, Quetzalcoatl, regarded poetry, music, dance and painting as the highest of the professions.

Although perhaps not as artistically pure, the Aztecs continued the artistic traditions of the Indian civilizations. One of the most well-known rulers of the Aztec empire was the prince and poet Lord of Texcoco, Netzahualcoyotl, whose labours left behind temples and poems that reflected his search for the single divinity.



THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The Spanish conquerors, while destroying all the Aztec temples, built churches on top of their ruins. They used the stones of the old pyramids for the construction of the colonial buildings. They used Indian labour but also Indian artists to decorate the facades and interiors of the new Christian churches. Religious orders tried to outdo each other in their buildings. European styles and ideas were translated by the Indian artists. Spanish styles in baroque architecture and decoration when used by Indian craftsmen became elaborate and fanciful. Indian designs and symbols were integrated into the patterns of European cherubim and seraphim. Gold and silver leaf were often used to make the decoration even more lavish.

In the eighteenth century, New Spain possessed such wealth that it was able to import the best Spanish professionals as well as the best teachers in art and architecture. At this time artistic styles and materials were often imported from Italy and France. In 1778 a Spanish artist came to Mexico City to found a school of engraving. Today it is the School of Fine Arts.

INDEPENDENCE: THE ARTS

Writing did not begin to have a Mexican character until after the separation from Spain in the nineteenth century. Mexico's independence gave motivation to many Mexican artists who sought the identity of a national spirit. Independence also gave Mexicans the opportunity to teach and work on major projects that had been the exclusive privilege of the Spaniards.

THE REVOLUTION'S INFLUENCE

The Mexican revolution of 1910 produced the most vigorous art that represented the new integration of the Indian population with the other groups of society. Young intellectuals, painters and writers attached themselves to different revolutionary leaders and in later years recorded the upheaval.

Professional painters were hired to decorate the walls of public buildings with murals. Many artists carried pistols while they worked. The subjects of their paintings were controversial. People who did not agree with the ideas expressed in the art often defaced the paintings and threatened the artists. The most famous muralists include Diego de Rivera, whose most important works can be seen in the National Palace; Jose Clemente Orozco, who painted mainly in Guadalajara; and David Alfaro Siqueiros, whose murals decorate the buildings of the Ciudad Universitaria (National University).

TODAY

Present-day artists in Mexico are as international as they are Mexican. Their art is more personal; they explore the hidden dreams of the urban and provincial regions of Mexico.

Writers such as Carlos Fuentes, Octavio Paz and Alfonso Reyes examine the lives of the Mexican people - their fears, their dreams, their hopes and aspirations. Mexican composers like Carlos Chavez have created operas, ballets, symphonies and themes for films. Eduardo Mata, an internationally known symphony orchestra conductor, represents Mexico all over the world.

Many young artists are emerging. Mexico is still a country where the spirits of the Toltecs and Mayas continue to duel and where the spirit of the artist dwells in all levels of life and society.

MURAL, UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO, DAVID ALFARO SIQUEIROS

LEISURE

Mexicans have a great capacity for enjoying themselves. They enjoy going to movies, watching TV, having picnics and doing other leisure activities similar to those we do in Canada and the U.S. but they also do other things which are very different from our customs.

FIESTAS

In Mexico one fiesta follows another throughout the year. Most fiestas are religious celebrations to honour a particular saint, but there are also national fiestas like our national holidays. Fiestas are a time for noise, music, eating and gaiety. At a fiesta you would see merry-go-rounds and Ferris wheels, cock fights, horse races, puppet shows, folk dancers, bullfights, balloon sellers and fireworks.

In Mexico each day of the year honours a certain saint. Important fiestas occur when a town celebrates its saint's birthday. The town members dress up statues of the saint and celebrate with parades, music, dancing and fireworks. In remote areas, Indians dress up as leopards and tigers and Spanish *conquistadores* and dance non-stop in the churchyards for days. They play out the arrival of Cortés in Mexico and his meeting with the Aztecs to celebrate their saint's day. Each town gives annual fiestas for its patron saint as well as nationally famous saints. Celebrations for ordinary saints last one to two days and for nationally famous saints, celebrations continue from one to two weeks.

At different times of the year in all parts of the country, there are fiestas honoring the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico's national saint (see Religion). However, on December 12, Mexicans come to Mexico City from all across Mexico to honour the Virgin of Guadalupe at Mexico's most notable religious holiday.

Christmas is the longest festivity in Mexico. Christmas begins on December 16 with the first of nine "posadas" or nightly re-enactments of Mary and Joseph's search for lodgings in Bethlehem. The actors and townspeople knock on doors each night asking for shelter for Mary and Joseph. One house takes them in each night. They are taken to a crib under the Christmas tree. Afterwards a party takes place with food, singing and dancing and the breaking of a *piñata*. A *piñata* is a big clay or papermaché pot covered with coloured paper and made into the shape of an animal or ship or star. The *piñata* is filled with fruit, candy and small toys and suspended in the air on a string. Children are blindfolded and take their turn trying to break the *piñata* with a stick. Each child is allowed three swings and once the *piñata* is broken, all the children scramble to gather the treats. The last and liveliest party is on Christmas Eve. However Mexicans exchange gifts, not on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day like Canadians, but on January 6, the day when the three Magi arrived in Bethlehem with gifts for the Christ Child.

At Pre-Lenten carnivals people dress up in costumes to fight mock battles between the devil and patron saints. Lent ends with the religious celebrations of Holy Week. During Holy Week at Easter there are outdoor Passion Plays where people dramatize the arrest of Christ, his procession to the cross and crucifixion.

On November 2nd, close to our Hallowe'en, Mexicans celebrate *El Dia de los Muertos*, the Day of the Dead, to pay honour to their deceased relatives and for the comfort of their departed spirts. In preparation for the festivities, shopkeepers sell candy skulls and a sweet bread baked in the shape of long bones called *pan de muerto*, bread of the dead. At this time billions of yellow and orange marigolds are sold as they are considered favourite flowers of the dead. Women prepare the favourite foods of their dead relatives and on November 2 the graveyards are filled with people picnicking at the gravesides of their deceased relatives. They offer food and flowers to the spirits and the tombs are decorated with black flags, ceramic skulls, coloured ribbons and lit candles and incense. The authorities are trying to stop this practice, but people still continue it. At home a marigold wreath is hung and marigold petals are strewn from the street into the house to guide the dead home. However, no one is sad. This day is for happiness, remembrance and celebration.

Fiestas also celebrate Mexico's national holidays and remember the great names of Mexico's past. A great celebration throughout Mexico is held on September 16, Mexican Independence Day (see History). It is easy to see that fiestas, combining both religious and national celebrations, are central to the Mexican way of life.

THE BULLFIGHT - Corrida de Toros

Bullfighting was introduced by the Spaniards to Mexico in 1529 only eight years after the Spanish Conquest and has remained very popular in Mexico. Every Sunday at 4:00 p.m. from October to March during the professional season, bullfights take place throughout Mexico. The Plaza de Toros Monumental in Mexico City is the biggest bullfighting ring in the world.

The bullfight begins with an opening parade of everyone who plays a part in the spectacle including three matadors dressed in "suits of light" so named because they glitter brilliantly in the sunshine. After the parade the *banderilleros*, matadors' helpers, tease and test the bull with their capes while the matador watches and studies the bull. Then the matador works the bull for himself using a bright pink cape lined with gold.

Next the *picadors*, mounted on horseback, gallop past the bull and prick the wide part of the bull's neck with long lances. The bull must be hit three times and this makes the bull's head hang lower. Following the *picadors*, the *banderilleros* return to the ring to stick the bull with three pairs of *banderillas*, arrow-like sticks with sharp barbed ends. This makes the bull's head hang even lower and makes the bull even madder.

Finally the matador meets the bull alone in the ring. He has changed his cape from the pink one to a smaller red cape called the *muleta*. He first dedicates the bull to the president or to a special spectator in the crowd. The matador demonstrates his skill and courage by teasing the bull with his cape and allowing the bull to get increasingly closer to him. Eventually it is time for the matador to kill the bull, but first he must get the bull in a standing still position. Then, to show his courage, with his sword he charges the bull or allows the bull to charge him and the bull plunges into his sword. Often the matador is presented with the bull's ear as a token of showing exceptional bravery.

Matadors become national heroes in Mexico similar to sports figures in Canada. It is said that bullfighting "combines grace and beauty with cruelty and ugliness."

GLOSSARY

adobe (a doh' bee) sun-dried brick; also a building made from adobe bricks

aviaries (ay' vee air ees) buildings or large cages for keeping many birds

Baja (ba' ha) a peninsula 1216 km (760 mi.) long in northwestern Mexico between the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of California

banderilleros (banda ree yer' ose) matador's helpers

basilica (ba si' li ka) 1. a church with a broad nave (main part), side aisles and an apse (projecting dome or point) 2. a Roman Catholic church with special ceremonial rights.

calzones (kal tzone' ees) loose pants, shorts

campesinos (kam pa seen' ose) farmers

Champs Élysées (shanz' ay lee zay') famous wide boulevard in Paris

charreadas (chah ree a' das) rodeos - riding exhibitions

charro (chah' row) a highly skilled and graceful rider

chayote (cha' yote ay) pear-shaped fruit of the gourd family that is cultivated as a vegetable

cherubim (cher' e bim) an order of angels

Chiapas (chee a' pas) a state in the southern-most part of Mexico, bordering Guatemala

Chichén Itzá (che chen′ eet sa′) ruins of an important Mayan city in southeast Mexico in the Yucatan peninsula

chili (chil′ ee) 1. the very hot dried pod of the red pepper, often ground. 2. a highly seasoned dish of beef, chilis or chili powder, beans and usually tomatoes

chronic (kron′ ik) 1. lasting a long time or recurring: said of a disease. 2. Having had an ailment for a long time

comida (ko meeda′) the main meal of the day, eaten at midday,food, meal, lunch

compulsory (kom pul′ sor ee) obligatory, required

conquistadores (kon kee′ sta door ees) conquerors

Cortés, Hernán (kor tays′, air nan′) 1485-1547 Spanish conqueror of Mexico

criollos (kree oh′ los) children of the Spanish born in New Spain

crucifixion (kroo si fik′ shun) 1. a crucifying, or nailing to a cross and leaving to die 2. the crucifying of Jesus in the Christian religion, or a representation of this

Cuauhtémoc (ku ah tay′ moc) the last ruler of the Aztec civilization

Díaz, Porfirio (dee′ az, por fear′ ee o) 1830-1915, Mexican general, president of Mexico. 1877-80; 1884-1911.

Diego, Juan (de ay′ go, hwan) Mexican visionary

enchiladas (en chi lad′ as) corn or flour tortillas wrapped around a filling and topped with a sauce and sometimes shredded cheese. They are usually heated or baked

ejido (ay hee′ do) a communally-owned village community, a co-op farm

frijoles (free ho' lees) dried beans - when cooked beans are mashed and refried, then they are called *frijoles refritos*

federales (fe der al' ees) soldiers of the federal (state) army

gachupines (ga choo peen' es) those people born in Spain who had migrated to New Spain

galleons (gal' yons) large Spanish ships of the 15th and 16th centuries

gringo (grin' go) a foreigner, usually of English or American origin

Guadalupe (gwa' da loo pay) a town (small city) in western Mexico close to the city of Durango

guayabera (gwi ya be' ra) loose-fitting shirt with open collar

guerrilla, guerilla (ge ril' a) [in Spanish: geh ree' ya] a member of a small defensive force of irregular soldiers, making surprise raids

gulf (gulf) 1. a large area of ocean reaching into land 2. a wide, deep chasm

haciendas (ha see en' das) in Spanish America, large estates, ranches or plantations, or the main dwellings on any of these

huaraches (hwa rach' ees) low-heeled sandals, having an upper part made of interwoven leather thongs

Huitzilopochtli (weet zilo poch' tli) the main god of the Aztecs

Hurtado, Miguel de la Madrid (her ta' do, mee gale' de la ma dreed') Mexican president (1982-1988)

isthmus (is' mus) a narrow strip of land having water at both sides and connecting two larger bodies of land

Ixtaccíhuatl (ees ta see' wat l) an extinct volcano in southern Mexico, 5286 m (17,343 ft.)

jalapeno (ha la pay′ no) a very hot green pepper with a distinctive taste

Jalisco (ha lees′ ko) state in west central Mexico

Juárez, Benito (hwa′ rez, ben ee′ toe) 1806-1872 Mexican lawyer, president of Mexico 1861-65; 1867-72

lance (lans) a spear with a sharp point

lariat (lar′ ee at) a long tight rope used with a running noose to catch livestock or tether animals

Lent (lent) a Christian rite of fasting and penitence for the forty days before Easter

maguey (ma gay′) any of the fleshy-leaved agave plants

mañana (ma nya′ na) tomorrow

maquiladoras (ma kee ya dor′ as) foreign-owned assembly plants

Maximilian (mak see mil′ yen) 1832-1867 brother of Francis Joseph I of Austria, emperor of Mexico

Maya (my′ ya) one of the earliest people in Mexico

Mayan (my′ yen) adjective

mestizos (mes ti′ so) people of Spanish and Amerindian heritage

Mexica (me shee′ ka) the people who were also known as the Aztecs

Moctezuma (moc te zuma′) The king who was ruling the Aztecs when Cortes arrived

mole poblano (mo′ lay pa bla′ no) chicken or turkey cooked in a spicy sauce of some thirty ingredients, the most important of which are dark chocolate and chilis

Monte Albán (mon tee al ban') ruined city of the Zapotec located near Oaxaca

México (Spanish pronunciation May' hee ko)

muertos (mwer' tos) dead, deceased

muleta (moo lay' ta) stick with red cape attached used in bullfighting

Nahuatl (na hwat' l) 1. a group of Indian peoples of central Mexico and Central America, including the Aztecs 2. the language of the Nahuatl people

oases (oh ay' seez) (singular - oasis) fertile places in a desert due to the presence of water

Oaxaca (wah hah' ka) city and state in southernmost Mexico bordering on the Pacific

omens (o' mens) things or happenings supposed to foretell a future event, either good or evil

Palenque (Pal en' kay) ruins of a Mayan city in southern Mexico

papaya (pa pie' ya) 1. a tropical tree with a large yellowish orange fruit 2. its fruit (a melon)

Partido de Acción Nacional (par tee' do day ak see own' na syon al') a Mexican political party

Partido Revolucionario Institucional (par tee' do ray volu syon ar' io in sti tu shun al') the ruling Mexican political party

paseo(pa say' o) custom of chaperoned "walking by" of teenaged boys and girls

peninsulares (pen in sool ar' ees) those people born in Spain who had migrated to New Spain

peso (pay' so) the monetary unit and a coin of Mexico as well as other Spanish-speaking countries

piñata (peen ya' ta) a hollow sculpture of clay or papier-mâché, filled with fruit, candy or small toys, broken at children's parties

plantain (plan tain') a variety of banana that is a staple food in the tropics when cooked

pneumonia (noo mo' nya) inflammation of the lungs caused by bacteria or viruses

Portillo, Jose Lopez (por tee' yo, hos' say lo' pez) former Mexican president

posada (poe sa' da) 1. shelter, lodging 2. re-enactment of Mary and Joseph's search for lodgings in Bethlehem

presidente (pres i den' tay) president; chairman/woman

Puebla (pway' bla) state and city in southeast central Mexico

Quetzalcoatl (kayt sal kwat' l) a chief Toltec and Aztec god identified with the wind and air and represented by means of a feathered serpent

revolutionary (rev e loo' she nair ee) constituting or bringing about a major or fundamental change

San Angel (san an hel') a residential district of Mexico City

seminary (sem' in air ee) an institute for the training of priests

serape (se rap' ay) a patterned blanket - shawl worn over the shoulders especially by Mexican men

seraphim (ser e fim) 1. an order of angels 2. one of the six-winged angels standing in the presence of god

serenade (se ren aid') [in Spanish, serenata] music played or sung at night, especially by a lover under his sweetheart's window

shanty (shan′ tee) n., pl. shanties - a small, poorly-built dwelling; shack; hut

siesta (see es′ ta) an afternoon nap

sisal (si′ zl) a strong fibre obtained from the leaves of the agave plant

sombreros (som brer′ os) wide-brimmed hats made of felt or woven palm, and sometimes decorated with gold or silver braid

taco (ta′ ko) fried or soft corn tortilla folded to sandwich a variety of meat, vegetable and cheese fillings

tamales (ta ma′ lees) cornmeal pastry with a sweet or savory filling, often pork, spiced with chile. Tamales are wrapped in corn husks and steamed

Tarahumara (tar a hoo mar′ a) a Mexican Indian people

Tenochtitlán (tay noch tee tlan′) Mexico City - its name when capital of the Aztec Empire

Texcoco (tes ko′ ko) name of city and nearby lake in central Mexico, close to Mexico City

thatched (thacht) roofed with straw, rushes

tomatillo (toe ma tee′ yoe) a variety of tomato that remains green when ripe

tortilla (tor tee′ ya) a round flat unleavened pancake made from corn meal (*masa harina*) and water

vaquero (ba kair′ ow) cowboy

Villa, Pancho (vee′ ya, pan′ cho) 1878-1923 Mexican revolutionary

wattle (wat′ l) a woven work of sticks intertwined with twigs and branches

zócalo (tso′ ka low) plaza or square in the centre of a city

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

1. Invite a guest who has lived in or visited Mexico to speak to the class. Suggest he/she bring pictures or objects from Mexico to give students a "hands on" opportunity. Perhaps make an audio or videotape of the visit for review or to present to other classes.

2. Collect, mount or make a scrapbook, or bulletin board display of recent pictures of Mexico. They can be grouped according to topic, then discussed and studied.

3. Bring Mexican objects from home or from friends to make a display.

4. Make a list of words or phrases to describe Mexico and the Mexican people. Discuss the lists. Did they have stereotypical ideas of Mexicans? What are the causes of these? Keep these lists to look at when the unit is completed. See if you can think of reasons for these stereotypes.

5. How do you think people of other countries stereotype people of your country?

6. Make up an "Information Kit" on Mexico as you study this unit.

a) Collect pictures and photographs of Mexico.
b) Take pictures or videos of:
- the students doing the activities on Mexico
- the students on field trips
- visitors to the classroom
eg. - an artist
- a musician
- a student
c) Make a mural or a large illustrative map.
d) Collect newspaper clippings.
e) Collect stamps and coins from Mexico.
f) Bring some Mexican arts and crafts.
g) Put together a collection of Mexican stories.
h) Make a Mexican flag and emblem.

Display these in the school display cases. Share them with another class or visiting parents.

THE LAND AND CLIMATE

THE LAND

1. The Yucatan and the Baja are both peninsulas. Find them on a map. Make up a definition of a peninsula.

Find the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf of Campeche. Make up definitions for isthmus and gulf. This can be done individually, in a group or as a class.

2. Draw a picture of a cactus. Find pictures of cacti in books and magazines. What are the best growing conditions for cacti? Bring one to class and take care of it. Where do cacti grow in Mexico? What are the growing conditions there? Do cacti have any practical uses? What are they?

3. Mexico is a very mountainous country. How do you think this has affected the Mexican people? Think about:

- clothing
- food
- housing
- transportation
- farming
- education
- customs

4. If you lived in Mexico what geographical region would you prefer to live in? Why? Think about the advantages and disadvantages of living in each region.

CLIMATE

1. Imagine you are visiting these Mexican cities in January. Plan what clothes and recreational equipment you would take for each of these vacations. Explain why you would take each item.
   a. Acapulco
   b. Mexico City
   c. Mérida

2. The Tropic of Cancer goes through Mexico. What other areas of the world does it pass through? Is the climate similar in all areas at that latitude? What other factors decide what the climate will be like?

3. Look up in the newspapers or watch TV for the daily temperatures for Acapulco and Mexico City. On a graph compare them with the temperatures in your city.

4. Using a video camera or tape recorder give a weather report for Mexico. Watch a TV weather show for your country to get ideas.

5. On a map of Mexico place the letter in the area where you might find each of these climatic conditions:
   A. Snow
   B. Rain measured in metres
   C. A temperature difference of 30 degrees between day and night
   D. Cool days all year
   E. Hot days and nights all year
   F. Hurricanes (see if you can guess)

Make a chart.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
desert		
Mesa Central		
coastal areas		
jungles		
mountains		

Think about:
- weather
- health
- food
- housing
- activities

5. Look at pictures of volcanoes. How are they different from other mountains? Find out how volcanoes are formed. Are there any volcanoes near where you live? Are volcanoes dangerous? Why or why not? Name some of the famous volcanoes in the world.

6. Most of Mexico's largest cities are in the Mesa Central - a large plateau between mountain ranges. Think of three reasons why the population is denser here than in other regions. Where do most of the people live in your country? Do you know why?

7. Make a relief map of Mexico
   Include:
   The Rio Bravo del Norte
   The Sierra Madres, Occidental and Oriental
   The Coastal Plains
   The Yucatan and Baja peninsulas
   The Mesa Central
   Tropical Rain Forests
   Deserts
   Volcanic Peaks

HISTORY

1. On a map of the world or a globe, trace the route the first people in Mexico may have followed to get from Asia to the new world.

2. Why did the growing of corn change the way of life of the early people of Mexico?

3. List five steps in the civilization of the Amerindians.

4. In all major religions people have forgone or offered up something of value to their gods. The Mayas and the Aztecs sacrificed people as well as food. In your religion what is given up, or what offerings are made?

- Christianity
- Islam
- Hinduism
- Judaism
- Buddhism

5. Cortés' success in conquering the Mexica was aided by an Amerindian girl named Malinchine, who spoke both the Maya and Nahuatl languages. She could understand the Mexica speaking Nahuatl and translate it into Maya, a language spoken by one of Cortés' men, who in turn could translate it into Spanish for Cortés. In this way Cortés found out about Mexica plots against his army.

Find out more about Malinchine. Tell the class about her.

Some think of Malinchine as a villain and traitor. Do you think this is so? What other ways could she have acted? What do you think you might have done in the same circumstances?

6. Write a play about the Conquest of the Mexica. Decide on characters - Cortés' *conquistadores* and priests - Moctezuma, his family - priests and warriors. Setting - Vera Cruz - Mountains - Tenochtitlán. Make your own costumes. Perhaps make a videotape of your performance or give a performance for another class.

7. Why did some of the other Amerindian peoples assist Cortés in his conquest of the Mexica?

8. Write a diary of a *conquistador* from his landing at Vera Cruz to the downfall of the Mexica Empire. Or, as a Mexica who first sighted Cortés, his men, horses and ships describe to Moctezuma what you saw.

9. The symbol on the flag of Mexico dates back to the Aztec founding of Tenochtitlán in 1325. This shows the importance the Mexicans place in their heritage. Research, draw and colour the Mexican flag. Choose some of the students' drawings to display on your bulletin board.

10. Moctezuma II was a priest who tried to rule his kingdom wisely. He looked for omens to predict the future. People are still trying to predict the future - what ways do we use today?

11. Name some of the first things the Spanish did after conquering the Mexica.

THE COLONIAL PERIOD of Spanish Rule.

12. Answer True or False for each of these statements. Rewrite the false statements to make them true.

a. The Spanish developed the silver and gold mines and worked them.

b. The Indians were allowed to be priests but not to be doctors.

c. The Spanish believed their laws separating the Indians from the Spanish were for the good of the Indians.

d. Epidemics and famine caused the death of 90% of the Indians between 1520 and 1650.

e. The Church in Mexico was very wealthy and owned a great deal of land.

f. Church lands were farmed by the Indians who had no land of their own.

g. *Gachupines* or *Peninsulares* were people born in New Spain.

h. Parents wanted their children to be born in Spain.

i. Mestizos, who are children of European and Amerindian parentage, make up most of the Mexican population today.

j. The priests protested against the inhuman conditions of the mine workers.

13. INDEPENDENCE

a. Hidalgo
b. Morelos
c. Iturbide
d. Juárez
e. Maxmilian
f. Santa Anna
g. Diaz
h. Madero
i. Zapata
j. Pancho Villa

Who am I? Match the names above with the statements they make about themselves below.

A. I am a priest. My idol was Hidalgo. I tried to carry on the revolution after he was executed.

B. I am a priest. In 1810 I called on my people to fight for their freedom from Spain.

C. Napoleon persuaded me to come to Mexico to rule. It was a bad decision.

D. Mexico made great progress during my presidency. Many foreigners invested and the economy boomed.

E. I was the first Emperor of Mexico.

F. I believed that the Church was too powerful in Mexico. I tried to limit some of the control it had over Mexicans.

G. My main goal was to get land for the (peasants) *campesinos*. These people want only to be able to make a living from their own farms.

H. When I was president the U.S. took advantage of Mexico and took over much of our northern territory.

I. My men and I on our horses terrorized those *federales* and did what we could to help Madero.

J. I organized a political campaign against Díaz to try to help the peasants who were having a difficult time.

14. Make a wanted poster for one of the two guerrilla leaders - Pancho Villa or Emiliano Zapata.

15. Write a couple of sentences on the Mexican Revolution as it might have been seen by:

a. a wealthy hacienda owner

b. a guerrilla fighter in Villa's or Zapata's army.

GOVERNMENT

1. Compare Mexico's presidency with the leadership of your country.

Government	Mexico	Your Country
1. Leader		
2. Position		
3. Party		
4. Length of term		
5. Leader chosen by		
6. Years of party in power		

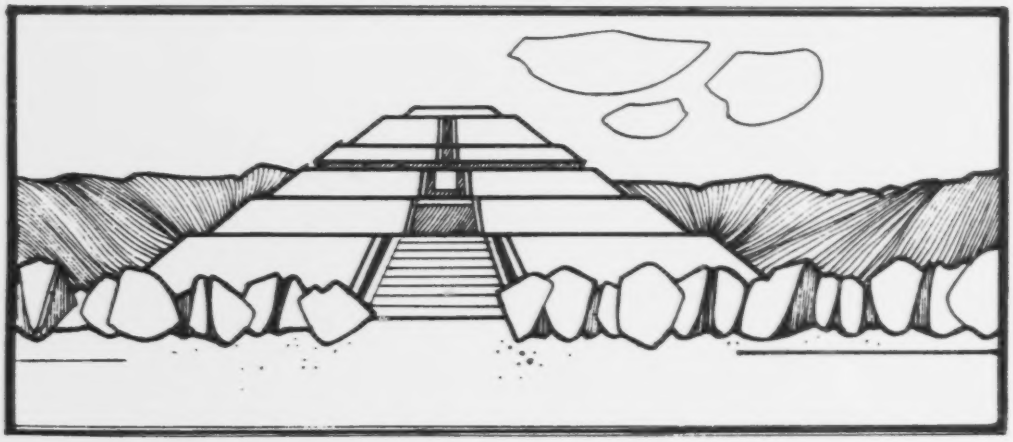
2. What are some other countries that have a government constitution based on revolutionary ideals?

3. In Mexico one half of the population of almost 78 million is 18 or under. How would the government of your country be affected if half of the population were 18 or younger? Think about:
   - education
   - recreational facilities
   - family allowance cheques
   - job possibilities

RELIGION

1. Name 6 ways Catholicism and the Mesoamerican religions were the same.

Discuss the meaning of each of the Catholic practices. Which of these are common in other denominations of Christianity?



PYRAMID OF THE SUN, TEOTIHUACÁN

2. Why did the Spanish destroy the temples of the *indio* peoples?

3. Why do you think Juan Diego's "miracle" helped to convert many people to Christianity?

PEOPLE

1. From which two nationalities are most of the Mexican people descended? Name some other nationalities from which Mexicans are descended.

2. From which nationalities are most of the people of your country descended? Make a list of other countries people have emigrated from.

3. Name some of the problems the Tarahumara people of Mexico must deal with. Do the native people of your country have similar problems?

4. Roleplay a family situation where one of the teenage sons wants to go illegally to the U.S. to get a job. The other family members try to persuade him to stay. Record the episode and have a class discussion on the immigration problem.

5. Television commercials sponsored by the government urge rural Mexicans to return to their villages and not to seek work over the U.S. border because "your country needs you." Write or produce one of these commercials.

6. Do you have an immigration problem in your country? Do the citizens of your country often emigrate? Where to? Why? What is brain drain? Do people from other countries often immigrate to your country? Why? Where do most of them settle? Why?

7. Imagine you are emigrating to Mexico. What problems and what advantages can you foresee? How could the Mexican people help you to adapt to your new country? Make a list of the things you can do to help new immigrants adapt to your country. Put some of your ideas into practice.

AGRICULTURE

1. Agribusiness is practiced in the north of Mexico just south of the U.S. border. Name five new farming techniques which have improved the farmer's production. Which of these are used in your country? What are the problems of using these methods?

2. Look at the list of crops grown in this northern region. (See p.35). Which ones are grown in your country?

3. Cattle are raised in northern pasture lands in Mexico. In what regions in your country are cattle raised? What type of land is best to raise cattle on? Why?

4. Give four ways that farming differs in the northern regions from the Central Plateau.

5. What are some of the difficulties facing the small Mexican farmers? What are some of the difficulties facing farmers in your country?

6. At the supermarket find as many things to eat as you can that come from Mexico. You may want to ask an employee of the store to help you.

INDUSTRY

PETROLEUM

1. When the price of oil was high Mexico earned a lot of money from selling its oil. How do you think this money should have been spent to best develop the country?

2. Where are the oil fields in Mexico?

3. Does your country produce oil? If so, where are the oil fields? When was the petroleum industry established in your country? Where does the money from oil go? What are some of the things it is spent on?

4. Pemex is Mexico's national petroleum company; it is owned by the government. Collect articles about Pemex or do some research on the company and give a report to the class on it.

5. Name other large oil companies. From what countries in the world do they originate?

GOLD PENDANT

MINING

1. The silver and gold mining industries have always been important to Mexico's economy. Research and write a report on Mexico's mining industry.

2. Find out the price of silver per gram or ounce on the world market.

TOURISM

1. Hold a class debate on the positive vs. negative aspects of tourism in Mexico or develop a chart which includes the positive and negative aspects of tourism in Mexico.

2. After reading Juan Huerta's comments on tourism in Mexico, how would this affect your behavior if you were a tourist in Mexico?

3. Discuss four ways in which you could better prepare yourself for a trip to Mexico. What are four things you could do in Mexico to help you learn about Mexican culture?

4. Is tourism important in your community? How do communities benefit from tourism?

5. Choose a place you would like to visit in Mexico. Research the area. Write a postcard home and on the other side draw a picture of the place you are visiting. Read the postcards aloud and then display them.

MAQUILADORAS

Complete this chart on the advantages and disadvantages of maquiladoras to the U.S. and Mexico.

	Mexico	U.S.
advantages	1.	1.
	2.	2.
disadvantages	1.	1.
	2.	2.

MANUFACTURING

1. Do you think it is better for a country to manufacture its own goods or import them from another country? Why?

2. Name five industries that would be the most important to Mexico. Why do you think so?

3. Are there any manufacturing plants in your area? What do they manufacture? To what countries are these goods sent?

4. If you lived in Mexico, what goods would you like to see produced? Why? Would they benefit other people? What would they add to your life?

5. In your country does the government enforce any regulations on industrial pollution control? In some areas, industries create health risks by not controlling pollution, but they make goods which bring money, and they employ people. In other areas, industries which make things are required to spend money and employ people to control their pollution. Which kind of industry do you think is better overall, and why?

COTTAGE INDUSTRY

1. What cottage industries exist in your community?

2. Mexican crafts are not only works of art, but are designed with a functional purpose in mind. Give four reasons why craft making should be encouraged in Mexico.

3. Why were people who made crafts important in the past?

4. Why is their work not as important now?

5. Do you think crafts should be used, or displayed as pieces of art?

6. Make a list of the crafts that are made in your community. Are they used for the purpose for which they are made or are they treated as art? Have any crafts disappeared from your community?

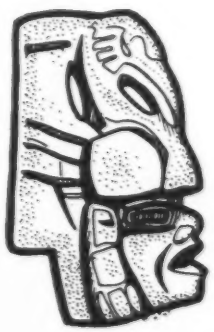
5. Look around your community to see if there are any shops that sell Mexican crafts. Visit the shop and ask questions about the crafts.

6. Bring to class any Mexican crafts students have at home. Discuss them.

7. Draw pictures of the crafts and colour them.

8. If you could learn to make one type of Mexican craft which one would you choose? Why?

9. Try doing a Mexican craft. Some choices you might consider are:
   - pottery
   - a piñata
   - weaving
   - a god's eye
   - crepe paper flowers



CITIES

1. Find out about the grid system of organizing a city. Is your community built using this system? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

2. Which of the three Mexican cities discussed in the text would you prefer to live in? Why? Which one would you least like to live in? Why?

3. What are some of the problems Mexico's cities have? Do cities in your country share similar problems? Which ones? Make a list of some of the things that could be done to lessen these problems.

4. Choose a city in Mexico to research. You might choose one of: Vera Cruz, Monterrey, Mérida, Acapulco, or Puebla. Show where the city is on a map of Mexico and give a report on it. Show pictures and brochures of the city. A travel agent will be helpful here. Be prepared to answer class questions on your city. This can be done in groups or as individuals.

5. Choose a city in Mexico and plan a trip there. Decide what time of year you would like to go. What would you take with you? What would you like to do and see while you are there?

HOUSING

1. Complete this chart by brainstorming the most likely reasons.

Fact	Reason
a. farm houses in Mexico are not isolated	
b. roofs are slanted in rainy areas	
c. thatched roofs were popular in the past	
d. clay tile roofs were used in Colonial times	
e. metal roofs are used now more than thatch	

2. Using the information from the text, draw a plan of a rural home. Include: the main building, outdoor kitchen and laundry facilities in the courtyard which doubles as a corral. Put people, animals, maybe even a garden, iguana, and flowers in your picture.

FAMILY LIFE

1. Complete this chart in groups or as a class.

	Mexico	Your Country
a.	Relatives most likely living in one dwelling.	
b.	What is the usual number of children in a family?	
c.	Who is the head of family?	
d.	What activities involve the whole family?	
e.	What are the mother's roles?	
f.	What are the father's roles?	
g.	Are servants common?	
h.	What is expected behavior of children?	
i.	Are godparents common?	

2. How would you like to live with Mexico's dating and marriage customs? What do you think of a chaperone system? Would you like to take part in a paseo? Why or why not?

3. In Mexico people take time to greet friends and share politenesses. Compare this with the fast-paced lifestyle in your country.

4. What is more important, being on time or taking time with people?

FOOD

1. Visit a Mexican restaurant in your community. Is the cooking Tex/Mex or is it authentic Mexican cooking?

2. Imagine you are opening a Mexican restaurant in your community. Using Mexican cookbooks for reference, decide what to put on the menu and decorate it. Put in the prices.

3. Visit a supermarket or grocery store specializing in Mexican foods. Look for and try to find out about such foods as:

different varieties of chilis
fresh coriander - cilantro
salsa
enchilada sauce
tomatillos
masa harina
mangoes
pepitas
plantains
papaya
black beans
jicama

Add other foods and explanations of them to your list.

4. Make a list of Mexican dishes which use corn.

5. Make some Mexican food and share it with the class. Try tortillas:

Corn Tortillas

1 cup *masa harina*
1/2 cup cold water (a little more if necessary)

1. Place the *masa harina* in a bowl and add the water all at once. Mix quickly with your fingers to make a soft dough. If it is too dry or crumbles, add a little more water. Set the dough aside for about 20 minutes, covered with a damp cloth.

2. Set an ungreased griddle or heavybottomed skillet over medium heat.

3. Cut down two closed sides of a plastic sandwich bag so that it opens like a book. Line a tortilla press with the bag so that the "spine" of the book coincides with the hinge of the press (in other words, the cut sandwich bag and the tortilla press should both open the same way). Form 6 or 8 balls of dough by dividing the dough equally. Flatten each ball and place one on the press a little toward the hinge rather than dead centre. Close the press, firmly pushing down on the handle. Open the press and peel the plastic from the dough (not the other way around). If the dough sticks to the plastic, it is too wet. Put all dough back into the bowl and work about 1 teaspoon of *masa harina* into it (more if necessary). Divide and try again. If the dough is too dry, the pressed tortilla will crumble. Put it and the other pieces of dough back in the bowl and combine with about 1 teaspoon or more of water. Once you've got the right consistency, the plastic will peel from the tortillas without problems.

4. Now lay the tortilla carefully onto the hot griddle so that no air bubbles form. Cook until lightly flecked with brown, then turn and cook the other side. The whole thing should take no more than 2 minutes. As tortillas finish cooking, stack them and cover them with a dry towel or cloth napkin. The tortillas may seem a little stiff when you remove them from the griddle, but they soften as they stand under the cloth. If you work slowly, the uncooked dough may dry out and you will have to add another tiny bit of water; keeping the uncooked dough balls covered with a damp cloth should keep them moist.

Caution: Cornmeal and *masa harina* are not interchangeable. Don't attempt tortillas with the cornmeal you're used to.

Note: If you can't get a tortilla press, use a heavy flatbottomed skillet to press out the dough between two layers of plastic wrap.

This recipe may be doubled, but do not attempt to triple or quadruple the amount. Start again with a new batch of dough, otherwise the raw dough will dry out before it is used up.

Frijoles - Basic Recipe of Beans

2 cups dried red kidney or pinto beans salt to taste 1/2 cup, or a bit more, lard, or comparable amount bacon fat (you can use 2 tablespoons peanut, corn or safflower oil instead of lard).

Soak beans overnight with water to cover them. In the morning some of the water will be absorbed, so add more to cover. Add the salt and cook the beans about 1-1/2 to 2 hours or until very tender. Mash the beans well and add the melted hot lard to them. Simmer until all of the fat is absorbed by the beans, stirring frequently to prevent sticking or burning.

To give refried beans a bit more flavour, you can add tomatoes, garlic, cheese, chilis, fruit and spice to taste.

Place the frijoles in the tortillas which are then rolled up and cut.

A favourite drink in Mexico is hot chocolate.Here is a recipe.

Hot Chocolate

4 - one ounce squares of unsweetened chocolate
4 cups of milk
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp. ground cloves
1 tsp. vanilla
sugar or honey to taste.

Combine all ingredients and heat over a low flame, stirring constantly, until the chocolate is melted and all the flavours are blended. Beat until foamy with an electric beater or in a blender or use a Mexican *molinillo,* a small wooden beater twirled between the palms. Serve in mugs which keep it hot.

DRESS

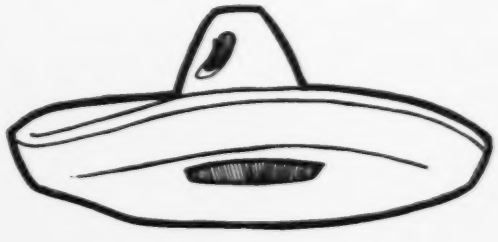
1. Climate determines the type of clothing people wear. How does the climate of Mexico influence the traditional dress of the people?

2. Name different ways the climate in your country affects the way you dress. In what ways are we less affected by climate than the average person living in the Mexican countryside?
   Think about - technology - buildings

3. Cotton is a very popular fabric in Mexico. Why do you think this is so? Is it worn often in your country? Why?

5. Dress in different forms of Mexican traditional dress. (Also see Agriculture, p.36 and Guadalajara, p.48). Don't forget the poncho is a form of serape. Huaraches (sandals) are also very popular in Canada and the U.S.

6. Mexicans who live in the cities are often very fashion conscious. What fashions do you think would be popular with them today?



HEALTH

1. What is malnutrition? Looking at the diet of Mexican rural families (see Food, p.59), what might a public health nurse advise mothers to feed their children in order to avoid nutritional deficiencies? Think about:

- vitamins
- protein
- calcium

2. What drugs do you <u>not</u> need a prescription for in your country? What drugs do you need a prescription for? Do you think prescriptions are a good idea? Why or why not? In Mexico most medical drugs can be bought without a prescription. What problems can this cause? Are there any advantages?

3. Complete these life expectancy graphs for <u>Men</u> and <u>Women</u>:

<u>Years</u>

80
70
60
50
40
30

<u>1986</u> <u>Mexico</u> <u>Your country</u> <u>1940</u> <u>Mexico</u> <u>Your country</u>

Using this information what conclusions can be made about health care in Mexico and in your country?

4. Here is a list of diseases. Place them under the correct headings below: high blood pressure, tuberculosis, cholera, smallpox, diabetes, typhoid, gastroenteritis, cancer, heart disease, malaria

Diseases of Developing Nations

1.
2.
3.
4.

Diseases of More Developed Nations

1.
2.
3.
4.

5. Herbal and folk remedies for disease are often used by the Mexican people, especially in rural areas where health care workers are scarce. Go on a field trip to a health food store or other shop where they sell herbal remedies. Find out what some of the herbs are and what conditions they are taken to cure.

6. Make a list of folk or herbal remedies found in your culture. What conditions are the remedies meant to cure? You may want to interview your parents or neighbours about these remedies.

7. Pollution can cause many health problems. Do you have any pollution problems in your country? Where? What are they? Name some ways Mexico City might improve its pollution problem. How can the pollution in your country be controlled?

EDUCATION

1. Many people in Mexico speak Indian languages. However, all instruction in the schools is in the Spanish language. Do you think this is a good idea? Do you think Indian languages should also be used for instruction? Do you think the Indian languages should be taught to Spanish speaking students? Why or why not?

2. English is taught in Mexican schools from Grade III upward. Do you think this is a good idea? Why or why not? Is it more important for Mexican students to learn English or an Indian language? Give a reason for your answer.

3. Think about some of the minority groups in your country, Indians, French, Italians, etc. How would learning their languages help us to learn about their culture?

4. Is it a good idea to preserve other cultures or should everyone in a particular country have the same culture? What kind of cultural studies could be taught in the education system in Mexico to help preserve the Indian cultures? How could the school system in your community help to preserve the culture of minority groups?

5. Educator Paulo Freire says that the true goal of education is not just to make students memorize large amounts of information but rather to teach them how to get and evaluate additional information as they need it. He says that it is just as important for them to learn how to make decisions and perhaps even how to act when necessary information is not available. Discuss.

THE ARTS

1. Find pictures of:
   - pre-Columbian art
   - the Mexican churches decorated in the baroque style
   - the post-revolutionary murals
   - modern Mexican painting

Arrange the pictures in chronological order. See if you can see the Indian influences in the art which make it distinctly Mexican.

Look for and study pictures of murals by Orozco, Rivera or Sigueiro.

2. Draw a mural either as a class or in groups. The great wall painters were given only one instruction, which will be yours as well: the subjects must be Mexican.

3. As you are painting listen to some Mexican classical music. Some composers you might look for are: Manuel Ponce, Rafael Tello, Silvestre Revueltas, Carlos Chavez, or listen to music conducted by Eduardo Mata.

4. Find some suitable Mexican poems translated into English and read them aloud. Try writing a poem on a Mexican theme.

5. During Quetzalcoatl's time artists were very highly regarded. Do you think this was as it should be?

What professions do we regard highly? How are artists regarded in our society? What do artists contribute to society? Look closely at some of the post-revolutionary murals. Who are the subjects and what are they doing?

6. The muralists who became popular after the revolution were considered controversial because they painted in an unconventional modern style. Can you see why they were considered controversial?

7. What are some controversial aspects of art today? Think about:
   - comic books
   - paintings of soup cans, etc.
   - posters
   - advertising
   - film
   - television and video

DANZANTE (DANCER), MONTE ALBÁN, OAXACA

LEISURE

1. Have a Mexican fiesta in your classroom
   - dress in Mexican style clothing
   - have a Mexican lunch and give each guest a decorated menu of the event
   - play mariachi music
   - perform your play or re-enact the arrival of Cortés
   - try a *paseo*
   - choose a Mexican name or decide where in Mexico you came from and what you do (perhaps wear name tags).
   - follow the custom for breaking the piñata
   - invite some guests; perhaps someone from Mexico
   - learn Spanish greetings and greet each other.

2. Discuss the similarities and differences in the ways Christmas and Easter are celebrated in your country and in Mexico.

3. What events are celebrated in your community, which might be compared to the Mexican fiesta? What do people do to celebrate these occasions?

4. Discuss the origins of bullfighting as a way of man showing his ability to dominate animals. What other sports involve cruelty to animals?